

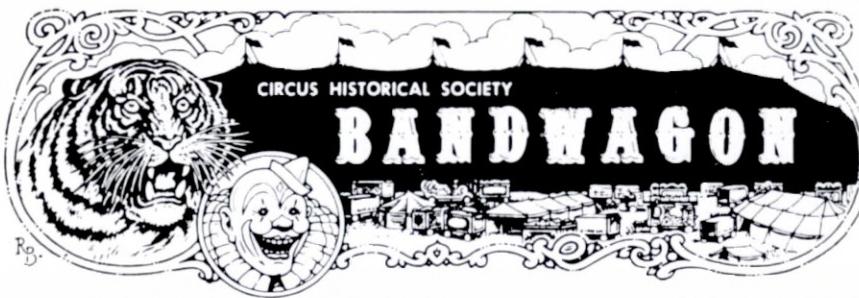
# Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Greetings  
of the  
Season

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1979



**THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Vol. 24, No. 6 November-December 1979**

**Fred D. Pfening, Jr. Editor**

Joseph T. Bradbury and Fred D. Pfening III, Associate Editors

BANDWAGON, The Journal of the Circus Historical Society is published bi-monthly. Editorial, Advertising and Circulation office is located at 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43221. Advertising rates are: Full page \$70.00, Half-page \$35.00, Quarter page \$18.00, Minimum ad \$12.00.

Subscription rates \$12.00 per year to members, \$12.00 per year to non-members in the United States, \$14.00 per year outside the U.S.A. Single copies \$2.00 each plus 65¢. Second class postage paid at Columbus, Ohio.

**BANDWAGON (USPS 406-390)** is published bi-monthly for \$12 per year by the Circus Historical Society, 800 Richey Rd., Zanesville, Ohio 43701. Second class postage paid at Columbus, Ohio. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BANDWAGON, 1075 West Fifth Ave., Columbus, Ohio 43212.

CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. Tom Parkinson, President, 42 Lange Ave., Savoy, Ill. 61874; Richard W. Flint, Vice President, 700 Allen Creek Rd., Rochester, N.Y. 14618; Edward L. Jones, Secretary-Treasurer, 800 Richey Rd., Zanesville, Ohio 43701.

DIRECTORS: DIV. 1—Fred D. Pfening, Jr., 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43221 (Ohio-Mich.-Ind.); DIV. 2—Copeland McAllister, 118 Beacon St., Framingham, Mass. 01701 (Maine-Vt.-N.H.-Mass.-Ct.-Del.); DIV. 3—James Dunwoody, 223 E. Central Ave., Moorestown, N.J. 08057 (N.Y.-N.J.-Pa.-Va.-Md.-D.C.-W.Va.-Ky.); DIV. 4—Joseph T. Bradbury, 1453 Ashwoody Ct., NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30319 (N.C.-S.C.-Ga.-Ala.-Fla.-Miss.-Tenn.-Ark.-La.); DIV. 5—Robert Parkinson, 101 Litchfield La., Baraboo, Wis. 53913 (Wis.-Ill.-Minn.-Iowa-Mo.); DIV. 6—James McRoberts, 1933 Crest Dr., Topeka, Kan. 66604 (N.D.-S.D.-Kan.-Neb.-Okla.-Tex.); DIV. 7—Joseph S. Rettinger, P.O. Box 20371, Phoenix, Ariz. 85936 (Mont.-Ida.-Wyo.-Col.-N.M.-Utah-Nev.-Ariz.); DIV. 8—Chang Reynolds, 1706 Wagner St. Pasadena, Ca. 91106 (Wa.-Ore.-Ca.-Hawaii); DIV. 9—Edward W. Cripps, 159 Morell St., Brantford, Ont. Can. (Can. and all countries outside U.S.A.)

**THIS MONTH'S COVER**

The Christmas card on our cover used by the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West Show around 1928.

It is printed in full color with the title in red outlined in black. The original is in the Pfening collection.

**New Members**

Thomas Doolan 1417 North 6th St. Manitowoc, Wisconsin 54220	#2499	Samuel R. Pearsall 1812 Morning Rise PI SE Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108	#2503
C. W. Eldridge 917 Royal Ave. #31 Calgary, Alta, Canada	#2500	Wayne S. Borden 3518 La Prada Dr. Mesquite, Texas 75150	#2504
Michelle Arce 6709 Verde Ridge Road Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif. 90274	#2501	William A. Prudden 392 Wendel Ave. Buffalo, N.Y. 14223	#2505
Claude Tonolli 7011 Vanalden Ave. Reseda, Calif. 91335	#2502	James N. Woodruff 2400 Virginia Ave. N.W. Apt. C-911 Washington, D.C. 20037	#2506
		Harold K. Ewald, Jr. 87 Hackensack Ave. Harrington Park, N.J. 07640	#2507
		Rudolph F. Grahek R. R. 1 Box 74 Reed City, Mich. 49677	#2508
		Spencer A. Stine 1551 Defense Highway Gambrills, Md. 21054	#2509

James B. Hand #2510  
2911 SW. 14th St.  
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33312

George M. Morrison #2511  
41 Patricia Ave.  
Pittsfield, Ma. 01201

Ann Plover #2512  
12617 North 29th Ave.  
Phoenix, Arizona 85029

Max K. Goodall II #2513  
2510 Lakeview Drive  
St. Albans, West Virginia 25177

Don Ballard #2514  
R. R. #1  
Circus River Camp Ground  
Norfolk, Nebraska 68701

Penelope Leavitt Moy #2515  
745 E. 15th Ave. #20A  
Eugene, Oregon 97401

**REINSTATED**

Frank J. Dailey #722  
420 49th St. E. Lot 18  
Palmetto, Fla. 33561

**CORRECTION ON  
GRIFFIN WAGON**

The Editor was in error in reporting that the Griffin carving from which the new wagon was built came from Hunt Bros. Circus.

Mel Miller, former director of the Ringling Museum of the Circus, in Sarasota, Florida, advises that he brought the carving to the Museum many years ago from the Sarasota winter quarters.

Joe Bradbury advises that there were two identical "Griffin" wagons, the one sold to Floyd King, and another that may have gone on to Bridgeport. The carving in question probably came to Sarasota by way of the move of the circus's winter quarters from Bridgeport.

Any information regarding the Hunt's purchase of a Griffin cage and what happened to it should be sent to the Editor.

**CIRCUS  
MEMORIES**  
**Circus Day—  
the Way it Was**  
**By John E. Clark**

How it all happened when trains brought the big show to town. 20 chapters, 100 photos, 112 pages. Soft cover—\$5.65; hardbound—\$7.65 by mail in U.S.

**GREENHILLS BOOKS**  
P.O. Box 15  
Randolph Center, Vt. 05061

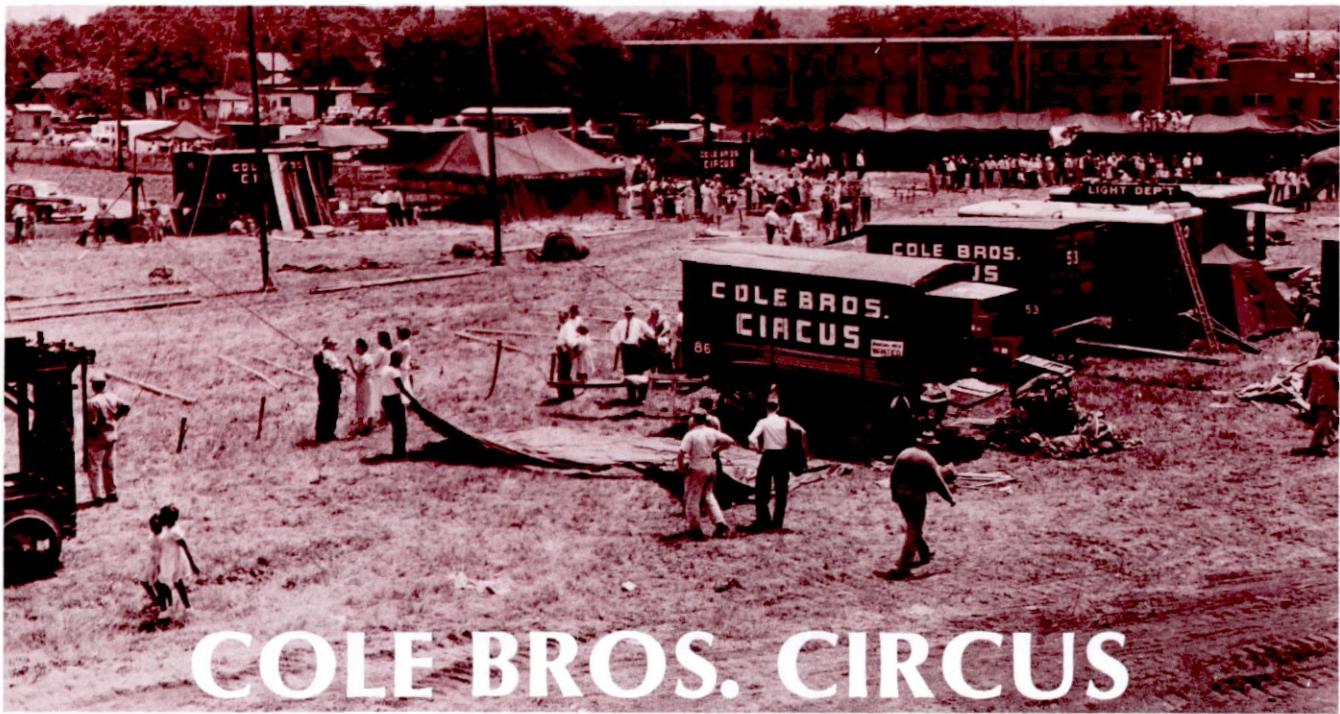
Merry Christmas  
from

UNDER THE  
**WORLD'S LARGEST**  
**TRAVELING BIG TOP**

# CIRCUS VARGAS



**GREAT IN '79**  
**GREATER IN '80**  
**"A Leader In Its Field"**



# COLE BROS. CIRCUS

## Season of 1948 by Joseph T. Bradbury

In mid-January 1948 Zack Terrell appointed James A. Gephart as general agent succeeding the late P.N. Branson. Gephart had served as manager of the advertising car for the past two seasons. Other personnel changes made by Terrell at the same time put William J. Lester in as traffic manager and Earl De Gloppe as advertising car manager. Terrell also announced that Ora Parks would again be the show's general press agent.

The January 24, 1948 *Billboard* said that a major feature of the Cole performance during the coming season would be a group of English-Australian ballet girls from two acrobatic troupes who would perform a number of routines. The reportedly 30 girls would sail for the U.S. in late March. They would play a special part in the new spec being staged by Harry Thomas, the script of which was given to Thomas by the late Rex de Roselli shortly before his death in 1941. Thomas said the spec would be done in Roselli's honor.

The same issue had this advertisement. "WANTED. COLE BROS. CIRCUS WANTS. Cowboys, cowgirls, trick riders, rope spinners, Roman Riders, Jumping Horse Riders, Girls to Ride Menage and do Web, and exceptionally good White Face Clowns. Also want Musicians. Side Show Wants—Outstanding freak to feature, Giant, Midget, Dwarfs, Fat Girl, or any other human oddity.

Novelty Acts, Lady Sword Swallower, Jugglers, Musical Act, Snake Act, or Lady to handle Snakes, Hawaiian Act, Oriental Dancers, man to fight lion. Contact Arthur Hoffman".

In late January the trade publications advised that Terrell had sounded out Gene Autry and his horse, Champion, to make a series of engagements with Cole Bros. during the summer. Autry at the time was a very popular western movie star and

**Photo No. 1—Zack Terrell with cane in hand gives instructions during morning set-up at South Bend, Ind., June 21, 1948. Photo by Otto E. Scheiman.**



**Photo No. 2—Cole Bros. lot at South Bend, Ind. during morning set-up, June 21, 1948. Photo by Otto E. Scheiman.**

would have made an outstanding attraction, however he and Terrell were unable to come to terms. About the same time as the Autry negotiations were going on, Terrell said that he had hoped that Charles Sparks would take on the job as executive director for the Cole Bros. advance. Terrell advised that he had been negotiating with Sparks for some time about the job but on account of health problems Sparks had delayed giving him an answer. It was pointed out that Sparks had served as manager for the Ringling owned Spangles Circus which was presented in Madison Square Garden in New York in the summer of 1943, his first circus connection since selling the Downie Bros. show at the end of the 1938 season. For a time it seemed Sparks would go with Cole Bros. but he later declined Terrell's offer.

Very little news from Cole Bros. quarters in Louisville, Ky. appeared in the *Billboard* in the late winter and early spring of 1948 but there were several advertisements. This one was in the Feb. 28, 1948 issue. "FOR SALE. Wardrobe for Tournament, Horse Blankets, and Costumes. Inquire Cole Bros. Circus, State Fair Grounds, Louisville, Ky."

The following advertisement appeared in the Mar. 13, 1948 *Billboard*. "WANTED WILD WEST PEOPLE. For Cole Bros. Circus Concert. Cowboys and Cowgirls. Trick Riders and Trick

Ropers. Write or Wire. Cole Bros. Circus."

Although Cole Bros. would continue on 30 cars as it had for the past two seasons a rearrangement in the type of car took place prior to the opening of the 1948 tour. With the English-Australian troupes coming, additional sleeping car space was needed so one more coach was added and a stock car was eliminated. Actually the stock car had been used only to store materials and machine shop tools and its elimination did not affect the total number of elephants and lead stock carried which remained essentially the same as in 1947. The source of the additional coach is not known to the author but in all probability was a system car purchased from a railroad. Likewise, the disposition of the stock car is not known. In any event the train lineup for 1948 was as follows: 1 advance, 4 stocks, 15 flats, and 10 coaches, total of 30. In 1947 it had been 1 advance, 5 stocks, 15 flats, and 9 coaches, also total of 30.

The number of elephants in the herd was 13, same as the previous season. Included were Big Babe, Carrie, Louie, Jean, Little Jenny, Nellie, Tessie, Wilma, Blanche, Big Jennie, Little Babe, Trilby, and Babe. Details on the other lead type animals and contents of the 10 cages will be given later in this narrative. Also given at that time will be information on the baggage wagons, tents, and the physical equipment in general.

As the beginning of the 1948 season approached it appeared that history might be repeating itself. As was the situation in the early spring of 1946 the nation's coal miners were again on strike and another confrontation between John L. Lewis, President of the United Mine Workers, and Harry Truman, President of the United States, was eminent. Truman was beginning the final year of the term of office for which Roosevelt had been elected back in 1944 and whose death in April 1945 had put him in the White House. Recalling the hectic days of the coal strike and railstrike in 1946 all showmen were nervous as the season's starting bell came nearer.

The April 3, 1948 *Billboard* quoted Terrell that Cole Bros. would open in Louisville but moves from there were uncertain. Terrell said that despite the rail restrictions brought on by the coal strike Cole planned to open April 15 but as yet no firm plans had been made to move out of that city. He added, "We did it two years ago and will again this year". Terrell advised the show would be routed on oil burning railroads and would possibly hold one day stands to a minimum. "As of today, I cannot give you our route beyond Louisville as that depends solely on what railroads we can get on."

A week later, the April 10, 1948



Photo No. 4—America steam calliope on the Cole Bros. lot at San Antonio, Texas, Sept. 25, 1948. Big top is in background. Photo by Joe M. Heiser, Jr.

*Billboard* said the coal strike was on in full blast and that the Office of Defense Transportation (a wartime agency still in operation) had advised that permits for movement of show trains would be necessary in all cases and that a ban had been placed on special movements on coal burning railroads. This in effect meant that under no condition could a circus train travel on a road using coal burning locomotives. Another item in the same issue said that the English ballet girls joining Cole Bros. for the season had been brought over by the English booking agent, Digger Pugh. The group would be made up partially from two of Pugh's troupes, the Aussies and the Wallabies. The girls would present several novelty routines in addition to

Photo No. 5—Cole Bros. midway, San Antonio, Texas, Sept. 25, 1948. Columbia tableau (reserved seat ticket wagon) is at left while at right is pictured the sideshow entrance with canopy over the bally platform and portion of the bannerline. Note the colorful double banner depicting Judy Allen and the fighting lion. Photo by Joe M. Heiser, Jr.

their ballet numbers in the spec. The official Call advertisement appeared in the issue and read as follows. "CALL COLE BROS. CIRCUS. Open for business at State Fair Grounds, Louisville, Ky., April 15, 1948. All performers and working men report on April 12. All musicians report on April 12 to Henry Kyes. Cole Bros. Circus, State Fair Grounds, Louisville, Ky."

The 1948 circus season was now at hand. It had been an interesting winter for showfolks. Much of the interest had been focused on Ringling-Barnum which would be again under the leadership of John Ringling North. He had returned to power in the late fall of 1947 following five seasons which had seen the Big One being run first by Robert Ringling and later the Haley's. Ben Davenport's railroad show, Dailey Bros. had grown rapidly and was now a major contender in the field and of course the Clyde Beatty Circus had established itself on a route once made by the Al G. Barnes Circus.

There were four railroad circuses going out in 1948, one fewer than in 1947. The list included Ringling-Barnum, 90 cars; Cole Bros., 30 cars; Dailey Bros., 25 cars; and Clyde Beatty, 15 cars. Major motorized shows were Mills Bros., Bailey Bros., King Bros., James M. Cole, Hunt Bros., Al G. Kelly





Photo No. 3—Cole Bros. bandleader, Harry Kyes, (at extreme right) and his big show band on the lot at Jackson, Mich., July 4, 1948. Photo by Don Smith.

Miller Bros., Rogers Bros., Stevens Bros., and Dales Bros.

Bailey Bros. and Clyde Beatty both opened on the West Coast in early March and fought it out for a while. Ringling-Barnum made its usual lengthy indoor run at Madison Square Garden, while most of the others waited until mid-April to hit the road. Generally the nation's economy was healthy and showmen were expecting another good season such as 1947 which had been profitable for most circuses.

Cole Bros. opened as scheduled in Louisville, Ky. on April 15 for a four day stand.

The April 21, 1948 *Billboard* carried the review of the Cole Bros. opener with headlines, "COLE BROS. IN CLICK DEBUT. Show Stacks Up as OK Bet for Big Year. Ruth Nelson injury crimps opener — Cristiani family again has prominent role."

"Louisville, April 17—If money is to be gotten this year in the circus business, Owner Zack Terrell should get it with the 1948 edition of Cole Bros. Circus which drew a better than two-third house at its Thursday (15) matinee debut on Kentucky State Fairgrounds here, winterquarters of the show.

"In the light of a minimum of billing in the city and surrounding territory the turnout of payees was better than expected, as performances at this stand have always been regarded more or less as 'shakeout' shows in which the bugs are ironed out of the performance before the show takes to the road.

"This year Cole offers two shows daily here, Thursday thru Saturday, closing the stand Sunday with a matinee. It then hits the rails for a one day stand in Owensboro, Ky., Monday (19).

"Running two hours and 10 minutes,

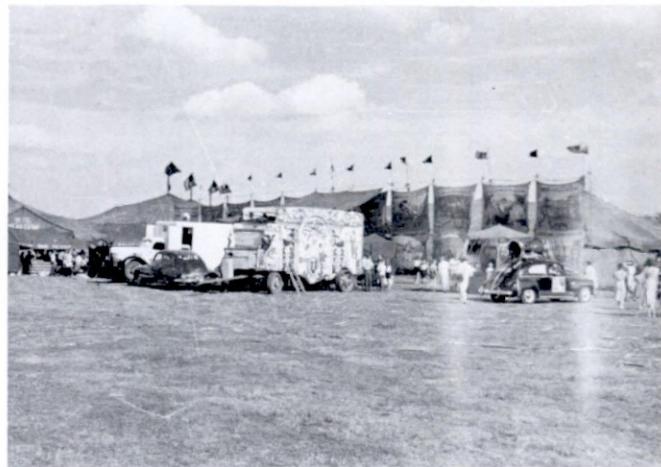


Photo No. 6—Cole Bros. on the lot at Delavan, Wis., July 21, 1948. Photo by Francis L. Hohenadel.

about par for the course, the matinee came off smoothly enough for a premier performance. This was especially true in view of the fact that considerable last-minute shuffling of the program had to be effected because of an unfortunate accident at the dress rehearsal Monday night when Ruth Nelson, who occupied eight spots in the program as featured equestrienne, aerialist and animal worker sustained a broken ankle when she was thrown from a bucking horse. She will be out of the line-up for an indefinite period.

"To the average person in the grandstand, however, the loss was not apparent. An excellent substitute in the person of Marion Knowlton was the link that supplied continuity to the performance, altho the overall performance should take on an added luster upon Miss Nelson's recovery.

"Best Yet Says Terrell. Terrell claims this Cole edition is the best he has yet offered and there is basis for his contention, for he has assembled some crack acts. New attractions are the Wallabys, billed as importations from Australia, and the Aussies from England. Each are 10 girl acrobatic acts which flank the center-ring Ortans Troupe during the program.

"Costuming again is colorful and attractive, from the opening spec, Ponce de Leon and the Fountain of Youth, to the finale. The spec took the usual tournament form with portions of it remaining at the conclusion to form a background for ballet girls while Ponce de Leon (Freddie Freeman) became rejuvenated by a drink from the fountain with Florence Tennyson offering excellent vocal support as she did at several points in the show.

"Terrell is using last year's big top, a 150 with three 50's, and attempted something new this year in waterproofing it while it was in the air. The top has seating capacity of 6,000. Altho Louisville had experienced heavy rains recently, the grounds were in good shape, a generous dousing of sawdust absorbing undue moisture.

The steam calliope has again been placed at the head of the midway to greet customers and let townsfolk know that the show is playing.

"From start to finish the show is good circus and a special bow should go to Paul Nelson, program director; Harry J. McFarlan, equestrian director; Col. Harry Thomas, producer and official announcer, who handled both chores in excellent fashion and Henry Kyes, new bandmaster, who succeeds Eddie Woeckener, retired. Kyes, a veteran circus band leader, has whipped up an excellent aggregation of musicians who provided flawless tooting both for program numbers and in a 20 minute pre-show concert in which Miss Tennyson also offered a vocal selection.

"Veteran circus-goers were unanimous in pronouncing this year's clown numbers, a vast improvement over those offered in 1947, special kudos going to several new offerings—notably the Kentucky Derby number and Wedding Bells—devised by Kenneth Waite and Otto Griebling, producing clowns.

"Staff Intact. The executive staff remains practically unchanged, with Terrell as president and general manager; Noyelles Burkhardt, asst. general manager; James Gephart, general agent; Fred E. Schortemeier, general counsel; William J. Lester, traffic manager; Estrella Terrell, secretary; Lorne M. Russell, auditor; Watson M. Koontz, tax counsel; Paul Nelson, program director; Joseph Haworth, legal adjuster; Col. Harry Thomas, director of performer personnel; Orville F. Stewart, general superintendent and safety director; H.E. Leeman, timekeeper; Ora O. Parks, general press representative; R.B. Dean, Floree Galt, C. Foster Bill and Frank J. Lee, press stories; Robert M. Burns, contracting press representative; William Wilson, public



Photo No. 7—Mack Truck No. 1 pulling the Columbia tableau with big show band atop in street parade at Delavan, Wis., July 21, 1948. Photo by Francis L. Hohenadel.

relations and radio; Richard Scatterday, national advertising; Al Hoffman and Karl Knudson, 24 hour men; Fred H. Donovan, chief of police; George Davis, steward; Robert E. Merrill, supt. of ushers; Josephine McFarlan, wardrobe mistress; William Dwyer, property supt.; Charles Luckey, shop supt.; B.L. Holman, supt. of sideshow canvas; F.J. McGrath, trainmaster; Arthur Hoffman, side show manager; Edward Hiler, local contractor; Frank Casey, supt. of canvas; Eugene Scott, menagerie supt. and elephant trainer; Winn Partello, concessions supt.; Harold Smith, supt. of front doors; Katie Luckey, asst. wardrobe mistress; John McGraw, ring stock supt.; Walter Rice, electrical supt.; Ace Donovan, truck supt.; Doris Wagran, physician; Earl De Groller, manager of Advertising Car No. 1; Harry McFarlan, equestrian director; Frank Wise, big top ticket supt.; Mrs. Digger Pugh, ballet mistress; Mr. and Mrs. Gus Tallieferro, program department and concession stand stock; H.C. Miller, baggage stock supt.; George Churchill, paint shop supt.; and William Spaulding, supt. of train porters.

"Show Draws Mittings. The Louisville audience went for the program in a big way, practically

Photo No. 9—Old Woman in Shoe tableau with 4 pony hitch in Cole Bros. parade, Delavan, Wis., July 21, 1948. Photo by Francis L. Hohenadel.

every offering drawing generous applause. Among the feature attractions were the Kinkeroos (Display 2), two fem on the trampoline, with a moppet of about three, an added feature, winning additional hands from the audience with a few flips on the tramp.

"Comedy aerial bar chores (Display 3) were capably handled by the Voise and Harrold troupes, both acts drawing yocks and applause from spectators. They were followed by Barney Cole (No. 4), the waltzing pony, put thru its paces in fine style by Capt. John Smith, trainer, and Otto Griebeling's clown band, featuring Horace Laird on trombone.

"The next offering featured Norma Adams riding Roman style in a 16 horse hitch around the hippodrome track to heavy applause. She was followed by Otto Griebeling in a new number, Wedding Bells, that drew squeals from the many kids present.

"No. 7, the Great Davisos, a Cristiani high-perch act, was a thriller and a solid click from start to finish. Davisos uses an unusually high shoulder perch as his wife, Louisa, offers a routine including an up-side-down walk, handstand, trap routine and ankle drops. The clowns then came back for another routine of top antics.

"Paul Nelson, presenting Harry, the riding sea lion, took the center ring in the next display, with Mahlon Campbell and Captain Smith handling ponies in flanking rings. All worked smoothly and drew appreciative applause.

"Taking the No. 10 slot were Corcata, June, and Ortans Cristiani in riding acts in three rings. The succeeding display featured Easter



Photo No. 8—Mother Goose tableau with 4 pony hitch in Cole Bros. parade, Delavan, Wis., July 21, 1948. Photo by Francis L. Hohenadel.

Cloud and Easter Boy, boxing horses presented by Captain Smith in the center. Both turns were presented in fine style and grabbed hefty rounds of applause.

"Eugene Scott and his two assistants then came on to present the Cole herd of elephants in three rings, with Bobbie Donovan, Toni Martin and Patricia Scott fronting the bulls in facile style. The act closed with the ballet of elephants on the hippodrome track in a spectacular display.

"Castle a Standout. Hubert Castle, ace tight wire artist, is again with the show, and he made his appearance in the No. 14 spot following a clown number, featuring Griebeling. One of the best in the business, Castle won spontaneous hands with amazing comedy and legit stepping on the wire. His unicycle routine was excellent, topped only by his finale offering, a backward feet-to-feet somersault while passing thru a hoop.

"Following a concert bally, the Cole Liberty horses make their appearance under the capable guidance of John Smith and Mahlon Campbell in Rings 1 and 3, with Paul Nelson taking the center spot with a group of Palominos. Their excellent precision is a tribute to long and careful training.

"Next on, a three-ring aerial ballet staged by Paul Nelson, with vocal by

Photo No. 10—Tractor pulling cage with clown band atop in Cole Bros. parade, Delavan, Wis., July 21, 1948. Photo by Francis L. Hohenadel.





**Photo No. 11—Sideshow fighting lion cage No. 64 in Cole Bros. parade, Delavan, Wis., July 21, 1948. Photo by Francis L. Hohenadel.**

Florence Tennyson, featured La Louisa in the center. At the close of the high trapeze to present a spectacular and thrilling offering She tipped off to a big hand.

"Appearing next were the show's three and five-gaited horses presented by Marion Knowlton, Norma Adams, Captain Smith, Bobbie Donovan, and Mahlon Campbell. This was followed by Display 20, an exhibition of high jumping horses, Scotland Yard and Niagara.

"Ortans Act Clicks. The teeterboard performance of the Ortans, another Cristiani turn, detracted nothing from the act's reputation of being one of the best in the business. Their work in the center ring was flawless. Miss Ortans drew heavy applause with her four-high top mounting and two and a half somersault to a chair.

"Otto Griebing and Freddie Freeman appeared in the No. 22 spot with their 'boxing' bout; followed by another concert blurb and the menage taken part in by Ethel Freeman, Marion Knowlton, Bobbie Donovan, Cora May Martin, Alberta Voise, May Wright, Flo Leary, Nena Thomas, Norma Adams, Maggie Wise, Rita Taliaferro, Alice Privett, Florence Menlo, Maybell Siebel, Captain Smith, Josephine Monarch, Mary Lyons.

**Photo No. 13—Riders and sound truck, followed by Arky Scott on horseback and the elephant herd in Cole Bros. parade Delavan, Wis., July 21, 1948. Photo by Francis L. Hohenadel.**



**Photo No. 12—Mack truck No. 2 pulling cage with sideshow band atop in Cole Bros. parade, Delavan, Wis., July 21, 1948. Photo by Francis L. Hohenadel.**

Patricia Scott, Elizabeth Glick and Sis Martin. Then came the horse, Easter Cloud, in a jitterbug routine directed by Smith.

"In the No. 26 display was the Cristiani family's familiar and excellent riding act, featuring the comedy of Lucio and his horse-to-horse somersaults and a four-abreast simultaneous jump to a galloping horse.

"Following a walkaround by all clowns, the Flying Thrillers took to the trapeze with a routine that has lost none of its punch. Next on were hippodrome races featuring tiny ponies with novelty riders, a Liberty pony against a horse and rider, and Roman standing races. The finale three numbers were appearances by English ladies of the ballet; 'Indian Slave maidens' from the spec. and a final appearance of the clowns.

"Side Show. Arthur Hoffman, sideshow manager, has his usual attractive display of banners. His line-up of attractions includes Judy Allen, lion; Rose Gammon, mentalist; Aida May, snakes; Major Mite, midget; R.V. Lewis, band and minstrel; Joe Carvallon and Pat Olevira, Hawaiian number; Manipo Harris, magician and punch; Joe Lee, Chinese top spinner; Jose, armless wonder, and Sandra and Tommy Thompson, knife and ax throwing.

"Wild West Concert. Tommy Privett manages the Wild West concert and is featured attraction. Also appearing are Jimmy Karro, Don Beall, Joe Chwirka, Clarence Canary, Arizona Jack Campbell, and a 'masked' wrestler."

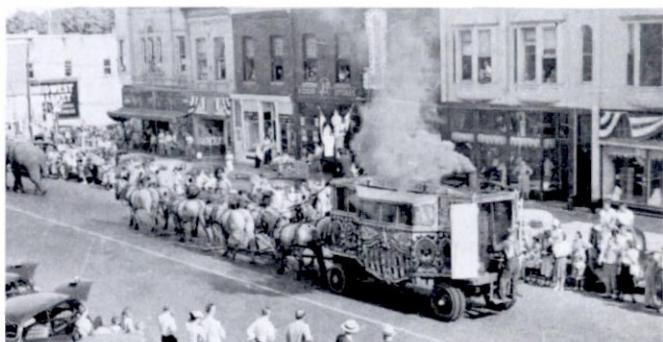
Note that the reviewer mentioned that last season's big top was in use.

Possibly, this is correct, even though the show had a new big top, menagerie, and sideshow on order. Terrell may have wanted to hold off on use of the new big top until after the expected early season rains and mud, but in any event the new top was on the show shortly thereafter. For sure it was in use when the author caught the show later in the season.

The show's opening in Louisville was a tremendous success with ideal weather and what Terrell told the press was the best business ever in its home city. Visitors noted the big top was set up only 50 feet from the quarters and compliments were heard on the fine paint job George Churchill and his crew had given the physical equipment.

Fortunately, the coal strike was of short duration. President Truman ordered the miners back to work under the emergency powers he still held from the wartime period. They refused. The government went into court, asked and received an order for the miners to return. They still refused, but after being hit by heavy fines, \$1,400,000 on the union and \$20,000 on John L. Lewis personally, that did it. The coal strike was over. The May 1, 1948 *Billboard* said that the miners were back on the job so show trains can now move with no difficulty. The same issue also gave

**Photo No. 14—America steam calliope pulled by 8 horse hitch brings up the rear of Cole Bros. parade, Delavan, Wis., July 21, 1948. Photo by Francis L. Hohenadel.**

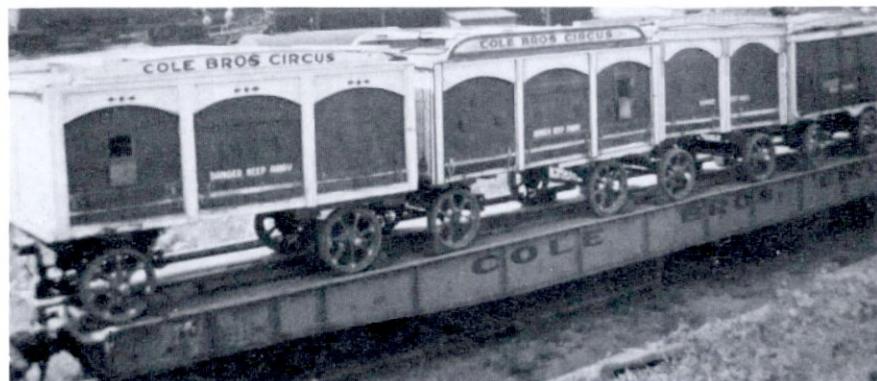


a report on the Cole Bros. route after leaving Louisville. At the next stand Owensboro, Ky. there were two straw houses, which was followed by Evansville, Ind. where there was a capacity matinee and straw house in the evening. The after show drew over a thousand that night, duplicating the concert pull at Owensboro. Ruth Nelson suffered an ankle injury in Owensboro but by May 1 was reported to be back in the program. Continuing in Indiana at Terre Haute the show drew a straw matinee and capacity night crowd. Then it was into Illinois for Decatur on April 22 where a late arrival resulted in the matinee being delayed an hour and attracting only a half house. The tent was packed that night. While in Decatur, Ann Russell, trapeze performer, fell 35 feet during her act but luckily didn't miss the safety net entirely and escaped unhurt.

In Springfield, Ill. there was a fair matinee crowd but it was full at night and at Peoria, the next day, the show began a two day stand where unfortunately business was hurt by a local strike at the Caterpillar plant. The city gave only one day's good take over the period.

Upon conclusion of the Illinois dates the show returned to Indiana for two weeks. The May 15, 1948 told the story of this move with headlines, "FULL ONES AND OVERFLOWS RULE FOR COLE IN INDIANA". The article noted that while the weather as a rule had been on the good side there has been some rain and cold days. But even when it rains the show has done big business. At Ft. Wayne, in good weather, there was a full matinee and overflow at night. Peru, May 2, a matinee only was scheduled for the Sunday stand, and in spite of a heavy rain there was an overflow crowd. It was the first appearance for the show in the town. At Marion, the next day, there was a shortage of laborers which resulted in the matinee being an hour late. Three-quarter houses turned out for both shows. Muncie, back on April 29, after a three-fourths filled matinee saw an overflow in the evening making it necessary to cancel some acts. so packed in were the patrons. It was a cold day in La Fayette, April 30, but despite the elements the matinee was almost full and it was capacity at night.

After a date in Anderson the show moved to Columbus, Ind. on May 6 where it drew well in spite of rain. The matinee crowd was strong and a full house was on hand at night. Cole Bros. was the first railroad show to play Columbus in 13 years. Next came three days in Indianapolis, May 7-9. The show unloaded in a light rain accompanied by a cold wind. The initial matinee was light but evening crowd good. Ideal weather came the next day and there was near capacity



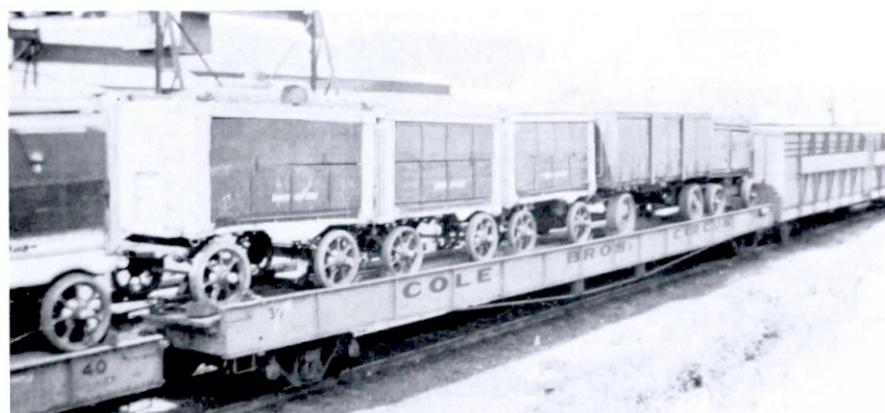
**Photo No. 15—Cole Bros. flat car No. 40 (Mt. Vernon) loaded with 5 cages at Radford, Va., Aug. 22, 1948. Photo by Joe Bradbury.**

in the afternoon and it was full at night. Final day's attendance was okay. Over the three day period the show drew approximately 35,000. Hubert Castle suffered a knee injury when he fell during a performance and was out of action for a day or so. The final Indiana stand was at Richmond, May 10, then the show went into Ohio for two days at Dayton, which was hit by rain for the entire engagement. The wet stuff held the take to what amounted to only one good day's business.

So far in the season the show had been reasonably free of competition from other circuses, however Mills Bros. was in opposition at two dates. Mills played La Fayette, Ind. two days after Cole but was ahead in Richmond, making that town back on April 26.

Continuing in Ohio the show played Middletown, Hamilton, and then moved into Cincinnati for two days, May 15-16. The *Billboard* reported that "COLE ROCKS 'EM ON CINCY STAND". It said the weather was great except for the last night when a storm broke at 9:45. On the initial day there was a full matinee and at night patrons

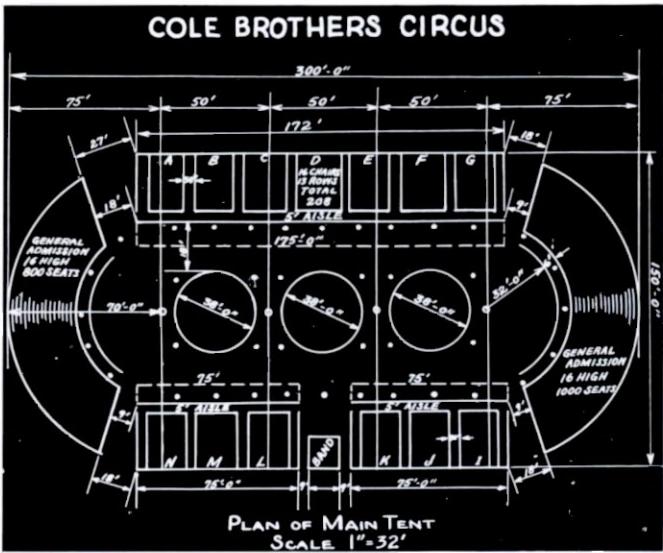
**Photo No. 16—Cole Bros. flat car No. 39 (old style Mt. Vernon) loaded with 5 cages at Radford, Va., Aug. 22, 1948. Photo by Joe Bradbury.**



were seated on the ground. The second day, Sunday, saw an overflow on the straw at both shows.

The route then took Cole Bros. into Kentucky for a couple of stands, on into West Virginia for Huntington and Parkersburg, then back into Ohio for ten days, which was followed by a trip through Pennsylvania.

The June 5, 1948 *Billboard* in an article headed "BIZ CONTINUES AT GOOD RATE FOR COLE ORG. Good Weather Holding", said that although it was cloudy and cool in the afternoon at Lima, Ohio the weather at night was good and the show drew a capacity house after a fair matinee. Prior to Lima, at Columbus, played May 22-23, the show bucked tough competition from an American Association baseball game and as a result the two day stand's business added up to only that expected for one. Springfield, May 24, produced three quarter and full houses. Final item in the report said that when the train was enroute from Parkersburg, W.Va. to a stand in Zanesville, Ohio, May 21, one of the show's flat cars buckled in the middle and became disabled. Fortunately the train was moving very slowly and no one was injured. The movement of only 75 miles was delayed for six hours while the car was repaired. Because of the subsequent late arrival, the matinee in Zanesville had to be cancelled but the night show went on as scheduled to a straw house.



**Detail drawing of big top used in 1948.**  
This was used by the contracting agent to show local fire officials exists. Pfening collection.

The June 12, 1948 *Billboard* in a report for the final stands in Ohio said that Mansfield, played May 27, saw a fair matinee and near capacity night house while Warren the next day had two straws. Two days in Akron, May 29-30, amounted to only one good day's take. The slim business was blamed on the heavy exodus of people leaving town for the three day, Decoration Day, holiday. Canton, May 31, was very good with an overflow in the afternoon and turnaway at night. Youngstown, last day in Ohio, June 1, was termed a Red One. Cole was the first circus in for the season and a good matinee crowd came despite an hour's delay in starting caused by a long two mile haul. At night the crowd was strawed to the ring curbs. The run to the first Pennsylvania stand at Greensburg, June 2, was a rough one. Numerous railroad delays hit and the train didn't get in until in the afternoon. The matinee finally started at 5:45 p.m. with a fair sized crowd but a strong turnout came in the evening.

So far in the season, although there were some rainy days, the overall weather picture had been the best in many years. Generally, the spring of 1948 in the midwest, was one of the best on record for circuses. Railroad movements had likewise been fairly good but the show was entering a period which would see the runs get progressively worse and before the season was over Cole Bros. would have encountered more than its share of slow movements, late arrivals, and other headaches due to the rails. Business, generally for most circuses, was running stronger than the previous year. It was an election year, traditionally one that would see slower than normal business for showmen, or

so the oldtimers used to feel. President Truman would be nominated as the Democratic candidate to run against Republican, Governor Tom Dewey of New York. The campaign would be a hot one but seemingly did not adversely affect circus business. Everyone said that Dewey would get elected but would he?

After the first Keystone state stand at Greensburg the show moved to McKeesport which happened to be the same day as the annual school and community picnic, a heavily promoted local event. The competition hurt and the take was not up to expectations. Matinee attendance was light with the big top about three-fourths filled at night. While Cole was in the city, Ringling-Barnum was only six miles away in Pittsburgh and much visiting between the two shows took place during the day. There was another late

**Photo No. 17—Frances Bradbury seated on Mother Goose tableau on Cole Bros. lot, Radford, Va., Aug. 23, 1948.**  
She had been married to the author two days earlier. Photo by Joe Bradbury.



**Photo No. 23—Train crew preparing unloading runs for Cole Bros. flat cars, Radford, Va., Aug. 22, 1948.** Photo by Joe Bradbury.

arrival in Butler, Pa., June 4. The matinee started at 5:30 p.m. to a small house but the night show was heavy. Meadville was okay despite some rain with both performances averaging half houses. It rained in Erie, Pa., June 7, but attendance was not hurt with the matinee drawing a strong house and it was an overflow in the evening. A storm coming late delayed teardown and loading to an extent the train arrived in Jamestown, N.Y. too late for a matinee. Poor railroad service became chronic and the train was late again the next day in Niagara Falls but the matinee did go on at 5:30 p.m. to a fair crowd but the folks really came out at night, causing the management to term it the biggest in the history of the show in that city. Next came a three day stand in Buffalo, June 10-12 and while in the city Dailey Bros. was playing nearby and there was another great visiting session between troupers of the two shows. Dunkirk was the final stand in New York and again the train got in too late for a matinee to be given but the evening show was capacity. Then it was a return to Ohio. The route through Pennsylvania and New York had been much shorter than normal. Again, as had been true since 1940, Cole Bros. shunned New England. Ringling-Barnum was going back into that area for the first time since the tragic fire in Hartford, Conn. in 1944 but for Cole still no dice.

Ashtabula, June 14, was the initial date for Cole's third visit to the Buckeye state so far in 1948. In spite of a soggy lot due to prolonged rains up to the day before show date. Cole drew a full matinee and had a near capacity at night. In Lorain, the next day, the show made its first appearance since 1940

and drew two turnaway houses. It was estimated that 500 were turned away at the matinee and 1000 at night. The city was show hungry, the last circus to play there was Ringling-Barnum, also in 1940. Findlay came through with two strong houses and there was a good draw in Defiance. Floree Galt, Cole's press agent who worked the town had arranged a popularity contest among the local girls with the winner named as circus queen for a day. The publicity gimmick worked to perfection and resulted in two capacity houses. Toledo followed with a two day stand, June 18-19, but the results were disappointing and the show claimed only a single days business was obtained. It seemed the show was finding it harder all the time to make a multi-date pay, except in the very large cities. As the Ohio tour ended Terrell told the trade publications that the latest trek through that state found good weather and generally strong business.

Next came a return to Indiana with first stand at Kendallville, Ind., June 20, which was followed by two days in South Bend, June 21-22. While in South Bend the show played host to the third annual convention of the Circus Historical Society. The stand was a big one in all respects. The first matinee had a three-fourths filled tent with a turnaway at night. On the second day it was capacity for both shows.

Indiana was followed by a run into Michigan for two weeks. Unfortunately, rain held the crowds down at the first stand, Battle Creek, to a half filled matinee and three-fourths at night. The July 10, 1948 Billboard told the story of the Michigan tour with headlines, "COLE GETS IT IN MICHIGAN. STRAW HOUSES ARE PLENTIFUL. Traverse City Registers Top Single Day Crowd of Season. Concert is Big." Officials of the show were quoted, "We are hitting the jackpot in Michigan. All down the line it was a record of full ones, straws, and overflows." One official even said it was the biggest single week in history for Cole Bros. The big concert business also helped. It started June 27 when the aftershow played to 2,000 in Acpa, and at Cheboygan it attracted 2,600. The same was true at Petoskey the next day and in Traverse City, June 20, the concert drew 1,100 at the matinee and 1,600 at night. Flint, June 24, was the lone spot in Michigan which failed to give the show top business. Port Huron saw two full houses, and Bay City, through a street promotion handled by Floree Galt, gave two overflows. In addition to the heavy play given the aftershow in Acpa, Cheboygan, and Petoskey, the regular performances in those cities saw capacity and straw houses registered.

During the latter part of the Michigan tour the old railroad jinx

—INDIANAPOLIS—

**3—BIG DAYS—3**  
STARTING

# TOMORROW

At E. Wash. & Keystone

AMERICA'S FAVORITE  
RAILROAD SHOW

# COLE BROS. CIRCUS

PRESENTING THE MOST STUPENDOUS  
ARRAY OF GIGANTIC FEATURES IN ALL  
CIRCUS HISTORY, INCLUDING  
THE WORLD RENOWNED  
**CRISTIANI FAMILY**  
WITH LUCIO — FAMOUS RIDING COMEDIAN

**HUBERT CASTLE**  
STAR OF ALL STARS ON THE TIGHT WIRE  
AN IMPRESSIVE ARRAY OF HIGH-IN-THE-AIR THRILLERS and Educated Horse Displays

<b>THE FAMOUS PAUL NELSON LIBERTY HORSE ACTS</b>	<b>GREAT DAVISOS MOST DARING ACT OF THE KIND ON EARTH THE AUSSIES THRILLING LADY ACROBATS FROM ENGLAND</b>
<b>PONCE DE LEON AND THE 50 WORLD FAMOUS FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH CLOWNS</b>	
<b>350 RENOWNED CIRCUS STARS AND PERFORMERS — 3 HERDS ELEPHANTS 50 CLOWNS — 250 HORSES — 20 TENTS</b>	
<b>BIG MENAGERIE HUNDREDS OF WILD ANIMALS</b>	

Twice Daily 2:15 & 8 P.M.—Doors Open 1:15 & 7  
**THOUSANDS OF BARGAIN SEATS AT EVERY PERFORMANCE**  
ADULTS — GEN'L. ADM.— \$1.20 (Inc. Tax)  
CHILDREN — UNDER 12 — 60c (Inc. Tax)

**HEAD CALLIOPE**  
THE STEAM CIRCUS GROUNDS SHOW DAY NIGHT

Newspaper ad used for the Indianapolis, Ind. three stand May 7, 8 & 9, 1948. Pfening Collection.

began coming up again. The train didn't arrive in Adrian, July 6, until 3 p.m. causing the matinee to be blown but the night show did draw capacity. Another late arrival in Three Rivers, the next day, was blamed for only a

half house at the matinee but the tent was three-quarters full at night. Earlier stands before the rail delays were okay. Ionia proved only fair but Jackson gave a capacity matinee and three-fourths night house. Hastings registered a strong matinee but weak one at night.

Three Rivers was the final Michigan date, then the show headed again for Indiana and another late arrival at the initial stand in Elkhart, July 8. The matinee was weak as the crowd had diminished on account of the delay in setting up and only about a half house came at night. The next day saw a return to Michigan for a single stand in Benton Harbor, then it was back into Indiana for Gary and Michigan City.

Cole next moved over into Illinois for five stands. Ottawa, July 13, was a dandy with a near capacity matinee and straw house at night. The following stand in Aurora was the scene of what might have been a very tragic accident. Ruth Nelson while doing her trapeze act fell 50 feet, during a performance but fortunately escaped serious injury when her husband, Paul, standing under the single trapeze, was able to break her fall. She was knocked unconscious and sustained a broken nose but otherwise was okay. She remained out of the performance for several days. Elgin, July 15, produced a half filled matinee and capacity at night, then after a date at Woodstock the show moved into Wisconsin with first stand coming at Madison. Next came Monroe and on July 20 the show played Janesville.

One of the most memorable stands of the season was scheduled for July 21 in Delavan, Wis. where Cole Bros. would help celebrate that city's Wisconsin Circus Centennial. Since no CFA convention was scheduled in 1948 the fans were urged to make the Delavan celebration and they did so in large numbers. The feature of the day was to be a parade put on by Cole Bros. through the streets of the city. However, it seemed fate was going to work against those who were anxious to see the parade. No regular daily parades had been given by the show since 1939. As the Cole train was moving through the yards in Janesville, Wis. enroute to Delavan three cars were derailed. As a result of this delay the train did not arrive in Delavan until noon. Many had lined the downtown streets since 10:30 a.m. the hour for the scheduled march. The parade did come but not until 4 p.m. The Billboard termed the march a huge success and noted there were three bands (big show, sideshow, and clown), 4 sets of mounted men and women, 6 dens of wild animals, including Jean Allen riding in the sideshow fighting lion den, the wild west lineup, the show's lead stock, elephants, and steam calliope.



From photographs taken of the parade the following elements can be spotted.

1. Four riders
2. Big Show band riding the Columbia Tableau, pulled by a Mack truck.
3. 4 pony hitch with Old Woman in Shoe Float.
4. 2 camels
5. Sideshow fighting lion den with Jean Allen and the animal inside.
6. Clown band riding atop a 3 arch cage (ex Hagenbeck-Wallace) pulled by a small tractor.
7. Sideshow band atop a 3 arch cage (ex Hagenbeck-Wallace) pulled by a Mack truck.
8. 4 pony hitch with Mother Goose Float.
9. Elephants
10. America steam calliope pulled by a six horse hitch.

Also in the line of march were two Roman style chariots each pulled by two horses. If the *Billboard* account was correct then there would have been additional riders, lead stock, and 3 more cages. The report also said that there were 25 local floats in the big parade.

The greatly delayed matinee produced a half house and there was a sellout at night. The stand in Delavan resulted in many fond memories for the numerous visiting fans, natives, and Cole Bros. showfolk alike.

One additional Wisconsin came after the big Delavan celebration. Cole played Racine, July 22, then headed south into Illinois for a week. A few days in Indiana came next, then the show played a repeat date in the Cincinnati area, this time on the Norwood lot, August 5. Poor rail service would be one of the big 1948 stories for Cole Bros. It didn't seem to improve. The Aug. 7, 1948 *Billboard* told about Cole's return to Illinois with headlines, "DELAYS COSTLY TO COLE ORG ON SWING THRU ILLINOIS". The article said that on account of a late arrival in Jacksonville (July 29) the matinee didn't start until 5 p.m. Two half houses showed up that day. The day before in Quincy another tardy arrival put the matinee back until 4 p.m. with only a thin crowd on hand. The train didn't get into the Quincy yards that morning until 10 a.m. the delay caused by a freight train derail-

**Photo No. 22—Cole Bros. big top on lot, Radford, Va., Aug. 23, 1948. Photo by Joe Bradbury.**

ment on the line. In addition to the late arrival the show also was faced with a last minute switch of lots, the originally scheduled one being soggy due to recent heavy rains. Despite all of these difficulties, along with hot, humid evening weather, the tent was three-quarters filled at night. Dailey Bros. had played the town two weeks earlier. Other stands mentioned in the article were Galesburg where attendance was a half house in the afternoon and three-quarters at night; Kewanee where the matinee was again late drew a three-quarters house with the top filled at night. Sterling, Illinois was a rough one with a heavy all day rain. The matinee went on as scheduled to a three-quarter house but during it a cloudburst hit. The lot and general conditions became so bad it was decided to cancel the evening show, tear down, load up, and move on to the next stand. Freddie Freeman wrote in his column that during the rain and winds the partition separating the men and women's dressing room fell down and he remarked—"Was Ponce de Leon's face red (he played that part in the spec), not to mention a few on the ladies side."

The Aug. 14, 1948 *Billboard* reported on the Cole trek through Indiana with the now familiar headlines, "TRAIN DELAYS PLAGUE COLE THRU INDIANA. Costs New Albany Matinee." The story read that bad luck in the form of rain and train delays had plagued the show during the past week. The matinee in New Albany was lost when a derailment of another train on the Monon Railroad delayed the Cole arrival to the extent it was impossible to set up in time for the afternoon show. The evening take was satisfactory. Bedford was only fair with night business decidedly off. At the final Indiana date, Lawrenceburg, August 4, there was an all day rain and the delay in setting up caused the matinee to be cancelled, however there was a full house on hand in the evening.

The initial date on the show's fourth visit to Ohio in 1948 was in Norwood where the water works lot was used. Earlier in the season Cole had played

on the Cummingsville lot in the Cincinnati area. Weather was ideal on the repeat stand but the lot was somewhat muddy due to rains the previous day. There was a half house for the matinee which began at 3:15 p.m. and at night the tent was filled. During the day there was a slight mishap when two wagons being pushed by a tractor, jackknifed and crashed into a well house at the water works park lot. Damage was slight. A late arrival by the train in Lancaster, Ohio the next day resulted in cancellation of the matinee but the night house was capacity. True to recent form the train was again late getting into Coshocton, August 6. The matinee was three hours late in starting but still attracted a strong house. Dover, Aug. 8, was the final date in Ohio, then the show moved into West Virginia for a stand at Follansbee where the train came in behind schedule. The take however was fine with a half house in the afternoon and turnaway at night. Wheeling, W.Va., Aug. 10, drew only a light matinee but near capacity in the evening. Cole continued in West Virginia for several more stands and the Aug. 28, 1948 *Billboard* advised in headlines, "RAINS IMPROVE, SO DOES COLE. W.VA. SPOTS GIVE BIG BIZ". The article went on to say that the show was getting a good take in the state with full houses for both shows coming at Fairmont and Morgantown. Business at Clarksburg, Aug. 13, while okay was not up to expectations. The matinee was strong but night house was weak. The below par take was blamed on the show playing the town a day ahead of the miners' payday. In Buchanan, Aug. 14, where a matinee only was scheduled the house was capacity despite overcast skies. The next day in Charlestown where there were full houses at both performances some excitement occurred during the engagement when an outside property wagon on the lot caught fire destroying Otto Griebel's clown car which was in the vicinity.

Moving into Virginia, business at Covington and Charlottesville was termed by the management as being only fair. It was somewhat a rough evening in Charlottesville, Aug. 18, as the show prepared to move on to Richmond. A bad storm came up as loading began and a wagon turned over at the runs causing considerable delay in the train's departure. Arrival in Richmond was so late the matinee was blown but the evening show drew an excellent crowd. Richmond was a two day stand so two performances were also given the following day.

In the meantime, August 20, while Cole was on its second day in Richmond, momentous happenings were taking place several hundred miles to the southwest in Atlanta, Georgia, which would ultimately involve the

show at its stand in Radford, Va. a few days later.

Back in Atlanta on August 20, Joe Bradbury was taking unto himself a wife. I had met Frances two years earlier, shortly after returning home from four years active army duty during World War II. We had been going together since then and had been planning to get married for some time, soon as we could find an apartment. The housing situation in Atlanta at that time was impossible but we did finally locate a place, a garage-apartment on the northside of the city. So the wedding was set for Friday, August 20, and the honeymoon to follow would take us up through Virginia and ultimately to Williamsburg.

The wedding was a small affair at 10 o'clock in the morning. After the blessing of the church and good wishes from the clergy and friends we were soon started on the honeymoon. We headed north toward Knoxville and eastern Tennessee in my 1942 Ford which was still running good after being in storage during the 28 months I was in the European Theater of Operations. Although we planned to see a number of spots in Virginia, as well as Washington, D.C., the immediate objective was Radford where Cole Bros. was to exhibit on Monday, August 23, and would arrive in town on the Sunday before.

Our route into Radford took us through Pulaski, Va., about 20 miles to the west, and we had noted in the circus route column of the *Billboard* that King Bros. would be playing that city on Saturday, August 21. We drove on the King lot just as the matinee was getting underway but since we had seen that show back in April at Marietta, Ga. a few days after the season's opener in Macon we decided just to hang around the backyard and lot in general. It had been a rough day so far for King Bros. Coming in from Floyd, Va. on a mountain road that morning the elephant semi had wrecked but fortunately the bulls escaped injury. They had finally arrived in Pulaski but

Photo No. 24—Cole Bros. loaded flat cars at Radford, Va., Aug. 22, 1948. Photo by Joe Bradbury.

were still pretty well spooked. I never did find out exactly why, but the show set up only three center poles for the big top, leaving out the fourth and one middle section entirely. The show had done fairly well but the 1948 season had been a very trying one so far, with the steam calliope being wrecked and all kinds of other difficulties encountered. King had been in Virginia for several weeks and had been in ahead of Cole for a number of stands, Charlottesville, Petersburg, and even Radford which was played on August 9, two weeks before the larger railroader was due on August 23.

By the time the King matinee was over we were ready to head on the short distance to Radford and get settled down to await the arrival of the Cole train the next day. In Radford we went by the Norfolk and Western depot and were told by the agent that in all probability the train would not come in until shortly in the afternoon.

Not taking any chances, early Sunday morning, we again checked with the depot agent, and he assured us definitely it could be expected around 2 p.m. and he also told us that the train would not stop in the main yards at all but would be immediately spotted on a siding about two miles away which was adjacent to the lot to be used. We had no trouble locating the siding and lot and while there with a sizeable crowd waiting on the train met up with Floree Galt, the show's young lady press agent from Canada, who was working the stand. She was very friendly, told us about the America steam calliope which would make downtown bally on the Monday morning show date, and many other interesting things about the show. She also said a complete set-up was planned immediately after unloading, the big top would be raised, seats set-up, and everything would be placed in readiness. Many shows would only raise the big top's center poles and leave the canvas rolled up in bags on the ground, waiting until Monday morning, to complete the set-up. Fear of possible bad weather often dictated this course, however, as of late, the weather had been fair and very, very hot, the summer of 1948 being one of

the hottest in August on record for this part of the country.

The Cole train arrived from Petersburg and was spotted on the siding just about 2 p.m. as scheduled. It had travelled in a single section, which was the usual method of moves in 1948, unless some special situation was encountered which required two or more. The locomotive was at the rear pushing the train to the point of unloading, with the flats in front, and stocks in rear. The coaches were spotted on a parallel siding fully several hundred yards from rest of the train. I don't recall exactly the method of unloading the flat cars that afternoon, but believe that after one group containing cages, cookhouse, stables etc., were unloaded, the cars were pushed out of the way, possibly forward up the long, industrial site siding, and the next group with the big top canvas, seats, props etc. was spotted at the unloading runs. In any event I feel sure two sections of flats were not unloading simultaneously as was sometimes done. As the runs were immediately adjacent to the very large, grassy lot, consisting of probably 10-15 acres or more there was practically no haul at all for the wagons and in short order everything was off the flats and onto the lot itself.

It was a beautiful sight to behold, especially for me, as I had not seen Cole Bros. since 1943, and only one other railroad show since I returned from Europe in 1946, that being Ringling-Barnum in the fall of 1947. The big top was especially inviting and thank goodness the show had returned to the traditional white color for this season. It was a 150 with three 50's same size top as was used by John Robinson in 1928 and 1929, a show still to this day so fond in my memory.

We hung around the lot for the rest of the afternoon until everything was up. Then, the next morning on show date, arrived on the lot in plenty of time to see the six horse hitch and the America steam calliope leave for its rather long

Photo No. 27—Cole Bros. Mack truck No. 3 pulling 3 baggage wagons down the runs at Radford, Va., Aug. 22, 1948. Photo by Joe Bradbury.





**Photo No. 26—Padroom on Cole Bros. lot, Radford, Va., Aug. 23, 1948. Photo by Joe Bradbury.**

trip to downtown. To satisfy the fairly large crowd on the lot gathered around it as it moved out the "cap'n" belted out "You Can't Be True Dear". When it returned you could hear it playing long before it came into sight, in fact, I think we heard everything it played during the 45 minutes it was gone.

During the morning hours we had pretty much the run of the lot, including a visit inside the menagerie where I made a number of notes. We met up with some circus fan on the lot, his name has long escaped me, but he said he had just seen Col. Harry Thomas and had been informed that it would be perfectly alright for any of us fans to hang around the backdoor during the performance if we desired, however we declined the offer as we wanted to view it from the best spot in the reserves we could find. Since the matinee crowd was fairly light we got excellent seats of our choosing right in front of the center ring on the long side.

The matinee performance was outstanding and never have I enjoyed a circus better. The Cristianis, Hubert Castle, the magnificent equine numbers, and Arky Scott's elephants were superb, and other little novelties such as Paul Nelson's riding sea lion and the boxing horses stand out clearly in my mind. I wish I had made notes on some of the selections played for the various acts by Henry Kyes band which in addition to playing for the complete big show and wild west aftershow also began the afternoon proceedings with a center ring concert of about 20 minutes which was

followed by Harry Thomas' candy pitch of which he must have been one of the all time masters. We remained for the aftershow but passed up the sideshow. I wish now we had also taken it in so as to have seen the cage in detail that was used to house the fighting lion.

A short time after the matinee was concluded my new bride and myself would leave the lot and head toward Natural Bridge, next scheduled stop on the honeymoon. We would continue on through the valley, would visit Charlottesville, then on to Washington, and finally Williamsburg before the money ran out and it was time to return to Atlanta and back to work. My wife was never the circus fan I was, but she was a good sport about it all, having to share her honeymoon with two circuses. Hanging around a show wasn't exactly new to her as she'd been used to it for the two years she had known me. As I now write this it's been almost to the day a span of 31 years and Lord knows since then how many cold, rainy, windy, muddy, and miserable days on the circus lot this lovely bride with the long flowing red hair and keen wit—and temper—has had to contend with to please her man.

**Photo No. 28—Small horse drawn gilly wagon used to distribute stakes on the Cole Bros. lot, Radford, Va., Aug. 22, 1948. Photo by Joe Bradbury.**



But as some wag once told me, well, if she was going to run you off, she'd have done it years ago. Through the years many of our more affluent friends have talked of their exotic honeymoons—the plush hotels, the cruise to Bermuda, the stay in Acapulco—some even in Williamsburg where they resided at the Inn or the Lodge—we stayed in Williamsburg—but couldn't afford either the Inn or the Lodge but come to think of it, on a honeymoon, even Joe's Modern Cabins, complete with electric lights and running water ain't too bad. But I always had a comeback when confronted with those who had more luxurious settings for their honeymoon. I'd comfort my wife by reminding her—yes, they may have had the Ritz, but how many people do you know, who can say as you can, that they honeymooned on both the King Bros. and Cole Bros. shows. She didn't appreciate that the first time she heard it and still doesn't to this day.

The following are the notes I made on the Cole Bros. Circus at Radford, Va., August 22, 1948.

**TRAIN:** total 30 cars. One advance, 29 back, travelled in single section. Cars back included: **15 flats** painted yellow with black lettering. (The flats were the same as listed in detail in the 1947 installment printed in the July-Aug 1979 *Bandwagon*) **4 stock cars** painted red with yellow letterboards and black lettering. Stocks were numbered 31 thru 34. **10 coaches** painted red with silver (aluminum) lettering. Coaches were numbered 50 thru 58 plus Zack Terrell's private car which was not numbered but lettered, "Owensboro, Ky."

On the flat cars were loaded 63 pieces of equipment, which included 10 cages, 2 floats (Mother Goose and Old Woman in Shoe). 3 large Mack trucks, 2 tractors, 3 caterpillar tractors, and 43 baggage wagons. (Note, cage for sideshow fighting lion is listed as a baggage wagon for props etc).

**BAGGAGE WAGONS** are painted red with white lettering. All are equipped with solid rubber tired wheels. Show carries a steam calliope for downtown bally in the old America tableau wagon. The Columbia tableau wagon is used for grandstand ticket sales and office.

**SPEC** is titled "Ponce de Leon and the Fountain of Youth". In the spec are two pony style floats, Old Woman in Shoe and Mother Goose.

**LEAD STOCK** consists of 12 baggage horses (used as train teams), 36 ring horses, 12 ponies, 13 elephants, 4 camels, 3 zebras, 2 llamas, 3 Indian buffalo, 1 American bison, 5 small donkeys.

**CAGES.** In the menagerie are 10 cages as listed below. Two are painted red with white trim and lettering and 8

are white with blue, yellow, green, or red trim.

1. No. 8—7 monkeys, 1 Blue Mandrill
2. No. 9—1 sea lion (cage painted red with white lettering)
3. No. 10—3 fallow deer
4. No. 12—1 gnu
5. No. 14—1 hippo (cage painted red with white lettering)
6. No. 15—2 black bears, 1 leopard
7. No. 16—2 chimps
8. No. 17—2 lions, 2 leopards, 1 tiger
9. No. 18—cage was empty, but two llamas tied to side in the menagerie tent. Animals probably were loaded in the cage during moves between stands.
10. No. 11—2 kangaroos, 2 deer.

Naturally, I wish I had made more notes that day, which is the sad story of most of us. If I could relive that time again of course both a train loading list and wagon list would have been made. As I recall from later seeing loading orders and wagon lists for 1947 there would have been virtually no change between 1947 and 1948. The cages were of the same type that had been carried the last few seasons, only difference would be that more carvings seem to be missing each subsequent season. Virtually none remained on the cages by 1948.

The *Billboard* reported that both performances in Radford produced only one full house. The matinee was light with a three-quarters house in the evening. At the previous stand in Petersburg, Va., there had been strong competition from a baseball game but the show was still able to draw a strong matinee and capacity at night.

From Radford the show moved westward on the Norfolk and Western railroad for a stand at Wytheville, Va. and tragedy. During the loading of the flat cars in the evening for the move to Johnson City, Tenn. Paul (Ace) Donovan, 41, trainmaster, was killed when he was pinned under a tractor which went out of control on the wet grass of an embankment at the Norfolk and Western station and turned over. Donovan had only recently been named as trainmaster, after having served as tractor boss for a number of years. At the time of the accident he was supervising the loading operations of the train. His wife Bobby was a performer in the show. Donovan's body was taken to Louisville for burial.

Leaving Virginia the show moved on westward into Tennessee with initial date at Johnson City where there was a lightly attended matinee but full house at night. Wytheville, the last date in Virginia, had given a half house in the afternoon and three-quarters at night.

The show moved into Knoxville for a two day stand, Aug. 26-27, and met with problems, as if history was repeating itself, the same as encountered in the city in 1941—very hot weather and a polio scare. Results of the two dayer

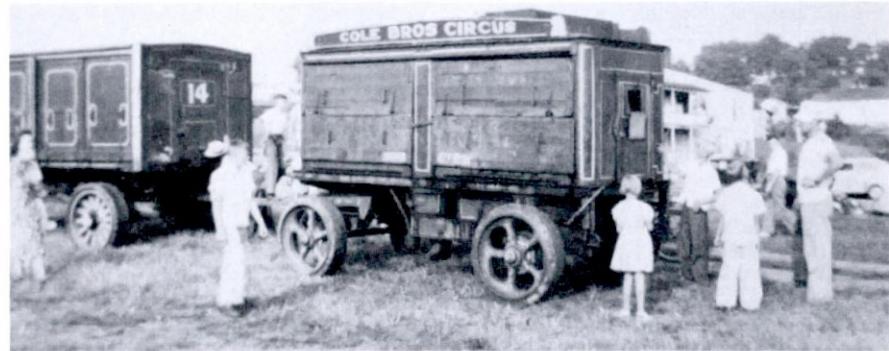


Photo No. 19—No. 14, hippo cage, and No. 19, sea lion cage, on Cole Bros. lot, Radford, Va., Aug. 22, 1948. Photo by Joe Bradbury.

were only fair, the stand not up to expectations. The show was on the new Clinton Pike grounds located over a mile from the city limits and transportation wasn't too good. The opening matinee was light while at night attendance picked up some but the tent was still not filled. The second day's matinee was also light but the weather cooled in the afternoon and the evening house was filled. Between performances on the second day, Trigger, one of the Cristiani family horses dropped dead. The below par showing in Knoxville was blamed on a polio epidemic in the area, the very hot weather, and inadequate bus service to the lot. At Chattanooga, Aug. 28, the heat persisted and the temperature was 101 by matinee time. The afternoon show drew a light house but the big top was full at night. Nashville was a two day stand, Aug. 30-31, then a rapid move across the state was made with one dayers at Paris and Jackson and two days in Memphis. Paris saw the matinee crowd very small but strong at night as Cole followed the Clyde Beatty Circus into the town by a week. Jackson also gave a light matinee but near capacity evening show. Memphis came up with what amounted to only one day's good business. Terrell

Photo No. 20—Camels and zebras tied to baggage wagon on Cole Bros. lot, Radford, Va., Aug. 22, 1948. Photo by Joe Bradbury.



termed the tour through Tennessee "not so hot" businesswise. Weatherwise it was a different story.

Going into Arkansas the show played Little Rock, Sept. 6, to two fine houses then got a strong matinee and full one at night in Texarkana the next day. A lengthy Texas tour began at Longview, Sept. 8 where the hot weather was blamed for the light matinee but it was capacity in the evening. Greenville, Sept. 9, again there was a slim matinee but full night house. After several days in the Lone Star State Terrell told the trade publications that business, despite the terrific heat, was much better than that experienced in Tennessee. Moving on into western regions of Texas the show found night business okay but still lightly attended matinees in Denison, Wichita Falls, and Amarillo. A move over into New Mexico for a single stand at Clovis, Sept. 14, provided a welcomed change as the show drew two packed houses but returning to Texas the next day at Lubbock it was back to a light matinee but satisfactory night house. The show moved eastward into central Texas for a few stands then headed south in the state. The Oct. 2, 1948 *Billboard* covered the current Texas tour of the show in an article headed, "COLE FINDS RURAL AREA BIZ GOOD, NOT SO HOT IN CITIES". Officials reported the show was getting average business out in the rural areas but poor business had been experienced in metropolitan sections. Farmers were said to have money to spend but city dwellers have been hanging on to theirs much tighter of late than have the farmers. This had

been a pattern experienced by Cole Bros., not only in Texas, but over its route for the past several weeks. Also Cole officials said this season's overall attendance was down from 1947 due in part to the polio scare in many areas. Also very hot weather had lately held down the attendance at matinees. In Midland, Texas the show ran into stiff competition from baseball playoffs and the Harley Sadler-McKennon Tent Theater which was playing a week's engagement in town. The matinee crowd was only fair but at night it was near capacity. A visitor at Eastland, Sept. 19, said that only one performance was scheduled but even then evidently the show didn't expect much of a crowd as it didn't bother to set up all of the seats. Two days in Ft. Worth, Sept. 20-21, saw three-quarters matinees and full ones at night.

Ringling-Barnum after making the West Coast on its 1948 tour was on its way into Texas and according to the Oct. 9, 1948 *Billboard* had posted plenty of wait paper against the Cole show. Although some Texas dates had been good, others ranged from spotty to poor for Cole Bros. Austin came up a light matinee and three quarters filled night house on Sept. 24 and was followed by San Antonio where the show played for two days of slim business. In San Antonio it was just a case of too much competition for the show as there was a local football game and an appearance by President Harry Truman in his campaign to be re-elected in November. The first day saw two very small houses and the matinee the second day was on the light side but the night's take was a little better. McAllen, Sept. 28, was a fine one, however, with a full matinee and straw house in the evening turning out. Other news of the show reported in the article told of an accident at the matinee in Austin in which Barbara Beale, a member of the Wallabys Troupe from England, fell during a web number and fractured a leg. An

**Photo No. 29—Cole Bros. loaded flat cars at Radford, Va., Aug 22, 1948.**  
Photo by Joe Bradbury.



interesting item in the same issue said that E.W. Adams had written that Cole Bros. and Ringling-Barnum were battling it out in Texas. Cole was first into Wichita Falls, Amarillo, Lubbock, Ft. Worth, Waco, Austin, and San Antonio. Ringling had "wait" ads in the newspapers the day before Cole was to exhibit in each of these cities. In San Antonio Ringling-Barnum had a half page wait ad the day before Cole came in and on the first day of the Cole stand appeared a full column wait advertisement. Both shows played two days in San Antonio, with Cole in Sept. 25-26 and Ringling-Barnum scheduled for Oct. 13-14.

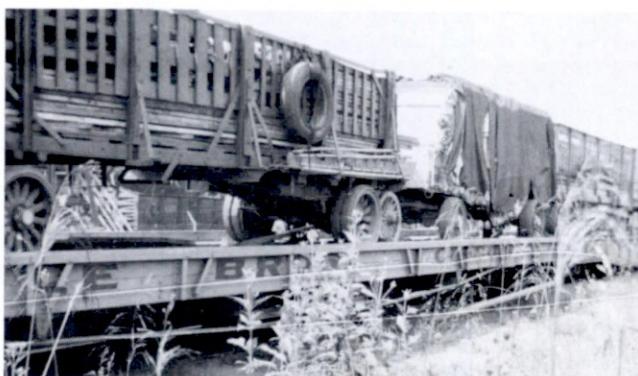
Harlingen, Sept. 30, was a welcomed spot for the Cole show which had done less than spectacular business all through Texas. The take was termed as maybe the biggest cash day in the show's history. At both shows the crowd overflowed to the ring curbs and average attendance for the concert was 2,000. Corpus Christi, Oct. 1, was another pleasant surprise. There was a strong matinee crowd and the tent was full at night despite there was a football game in the evening played in a stadium adjacent to the Cole lot. Victoria, the following day had only a half house in the afternoon and three-quarters at night. Galveston came next, then Baytown, formerly known as Goose Creek, was the final stand in Texas on October 5. The last one was a goodie, however, with two big houses. A move into Louisiana followed but the initial stand in the state, Lake Charles, was a bitter disappointment. A late arrival caused a delay in starting time of the matinee which was lightly attended as well as was the evening show. After two additional dates in the state the show entered Mississippi at Brookhaven, Oct. 9, where there was a small matinee and full night house. Hattiesburg in spite of threatening weather was a profitable stand. Meridian, Oct. 12, was a tremendous one with a near capacity matinee and at night the crowd was strawed to the ring curbs. Additional Mississippi dates followed at Columbus and Tupelo, then at the final stand in the state, Corinth, Oct. 15, there were

two capacity houses. Mississippi had given Cole Bros. a fine tour, much better than had been the fare of late.

Continuing on eastward the show moved into Alabama where the first date, Huntsville, Oct. 16, was a good spot with fine business. The show went over into Georgia to play Rome where there was a near capacity matinee and full one at night then returned immediately to Alabama. Anniston gave two strong houses but then the weather became cold and disagreeable and this hurt the night crowds at the final dates in the state. Next came a swing through southern Georgia for six stands. The Nov. 6, 1948 *Billboard* told the story of this trip with headlines, "COLE ORG GETS COOPERATION FROM WEATHER. GA BIZ IS GOOD." Hampered by cold and rough weather last week Cole received a break in the weather at Brunswick Ga., Oct. 25, and chalked up some excellent business. There were two straws in Brunswick. Earlier there had been two full ones in Columbus. Tifton, with a late arrival had a three-quarters matinee but a full one at night. Fitzgerald had a half filled matinee and full night house. Following Brunswick the show played Valdosta and then was at Thomasville, October 27. The latter stand was a disappointment with only sparsely attended performances. Floree Galt, press representative, closed that day and returned to her home in Canada.

Thomasville was the final Georgia stand then the show returned to Alabama at Troy, Oct. 28, which was followed by Andalusia the next day. A short run into Florida came next with the show at Pensacola for two days, Oct. 30-31. The weather was warm for the matinees but cool at night. There were capacity houses at the first night performance and matinee the second day and it was three-quarters for the other shows. It was back into Alabama

**Photo No. 31—Cole Bros. loaded flat cars at Radford, Va., Aug 22, 1948.**  
Flat at left was built from a former stock car. Note the stake puller loaded between stringer wagon and tarpulin covered Columbia tableau. Photo by Joe Bradbury.



for Mobile, Nov. 1, which was a winner in spite of cloudy and damp weather. There was a late arrival and the matinee didn't start until 5 p.m. It was lightly attended in a heavy downpour but in the evening the overflow crowd was strawed to the ring curbs. A return to Mississippi followed for the two remaining dates of the 1948 season. There was fine attendance at Gulfport, then came the final stand at Jackson on November 3. There was a late arrival on the last day and the matinee didn't start until 4:30 p.m. but there was a half house on hand and at night the tent was filled to capacity. The *Billboard* proclaimed Cole's final week of the season to have been a winner. Following the close the show returned to its Louisville, Ky. quarters.

For weeks there had been strong rumors that Terrell was about to sell the show. The Nov. 20, 1948 *Billboard* discussed this matter as well as reported on the season just concluded by Cole Bros. The article said that Terrell had spiked the rumor about the show being sold to Jack (Abie) Tavlin and would not go out in 1949. Terrell was quoted, "You have my word for it that Cole Bros. positively will be on the road in 1949 opening in Louisville about the usual time." The rumor that Tavlin would buy the show had been out since summer. Tavlin, himself, was quoted that he still has his hopes of raising the necessary cash to purchase Cole Bros. The show moved into Louisville quarters following its close in Jackson, Miss., the 600 mile run having been made in good time. The show arrived Friday, November 5. Unloading was hampered by a driving rain but a full crew worked until late at night to complete the job. Terrell said the 1948 season was the best from a weather standpoint that he could recall. "We had only 4 muddy lots in 29 weeks on the road. From a standpoint of business the season was spotty. We had some bad weeks, but we had some mighty good ones. We broke all attendance records in several spots, starting with Lexington, Ky."

It later was revealed that Tavlin had indeed purchased Cole Bros. on November 19 but the official announcement was not made until the latter part of December. As late as early December the trade publications were wondering aloud, "Has Tavlin Bought Cole?" In the Dec. 4, 1948 *Billboard* Terrell would only confirm that he and Tavlin had been in a recent meeting in Indianapolis to work out details of the sale. He was quoted, "It looks like a sale but confirmation will have to come from Tavlin". Reporters couldn't catch up with Tavlin at the present time. He had been in Chicago and was now headed for New York City, but reportedly he had told several people he had bought Cole Bros.



Photo No. 32—No. 21, steam boiler wagon, and cookhouse on Cole Bros. lot, Radford, Va., Aug. 23, 1948. Photo by Joe Bradbury.

Finally the Dec. 25, 1948 *Billboard* gave the official news. The sale of Cole Bros. to Jack Tavlin and associates had been made. Purchase price was reported to have been \$350,000. Tavlin, himself, would carry the title of general manager and had already been lining up a staff for 1949. Veteran advance man, R.M. Harvey, had been named general agent and traffic manager. Noyelles Burkhardt was being retained as manager. Vander Barrette would produce the show. Beverly Kelly would head the press department, and William Oliver, advance car manager with Daily Bros. in 1948, would act in similar capacity for Cole Bros. next season. The show would remain on 30 cars and would retain winterquarters in Louisville for the time being but it was intended to move to a new site following the 1949 season. A new combination quarters, zoo, and amusement park was to be constructed near Miami, Fla. Kiddieland type rides and shows would be added in time to the complex. Circus ring and menagerie stock, plus acts in rehearsal, would be used as chief attractions of the new quarters to be built. Additional information announced at the time said that a new big top, 150 with three 50s, plus a cookhouse tent had been ordered from U.S. Tent and Awning Company while a menagerie, sideshow, and padroom would come from O'Henry. Allen J. Lester was hired for contracting press and Frank Morrisey on radio. It was announced that a ballet program had been set with rehearsals to begin the third week in February. Final note said that tentative plans call for the show to open in Louisville, April 14, 1949.

Noyelles Burkhardt, in his interview, says that the purchase price mentioned in the *Billboard* was too high. He recalls that Jack Tavlin and his associates bought the Cole Bros. Circus from Zack Terrell in the fall of 1948 for \$225,000. The deal called for \$125,000 down payment with remainder to be paid in 1949 after the show went on the road. Terrell of course held a mortgage on the property pending final payment.

And thus Zack Terrell, who along with his partner, the late Jess Adkins,

had framed Cole Bros. in their winter of 1934-35 was now out of the picture although he would act in an advisory capacity to the new owners during the winter while the show was in quarters. Also he intended to stick pretty close to the scene until he received full payment for the show.

The 1948 season just completed had been a good one for some shows, namely Ringling-Barnum which had a terrific year; a poor one for some such as King Bros. which was quartered in Rosenberg, Texas with its owner, Floyd King, just about broke, and a fair one for the vast majority of circuses which were on the road. Cole Bros. could be classed with those who did fairly well. Harry Truman was elected president in November and generally business continued at a brisk pace. There were exciting times ahead for the circus world during the coming winter with the center of attention being directed toward Cole Bros. in Louisville and its new owners, Jack Tavlin and associates.

**STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION as required by 39 U.S.C. 3626.  
BANDWAGON is published every two months at 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43221.**

**The names and addresses of the publisher, editor and managing editor are: Publisher and Editor Fred D. Pfening, Jr., 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43221. Managing editor: None.**

**The owner is the Circus Historical Society, 800 Richy Rd., Zanesville, Ohio 43701, known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders owning 1 percent or more of the total amount of bond, mortgages, or other securities: none.**

**The average number of copies of each issue during preceding 12 months is (A) Total number of copies printed-1483; (B) Paid circulation through sales dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales-none; (C) Mail subscriptions-1290; (D) Total paid circulation-1290; (E) Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means, samples, complimentary, and other free copies-6; (F) Total distribution-1296; (G) Copies not distributed, office use, left over, unaccounted for, spoiled after printing-187; (H) Returns from news agents-none; (I) Total-1483.**

**Actual number of copies of a single issue nearest to filing date is: (A) Total number of copies printed-1500; (B) paid circulation, (1) sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales-none, mail subscription-1257; (C) Total paid circulation-1257; (D) free distribution by mail, carrier or other means-6; (E) Total distribution-1257; (F) copies not distributed; (1) office use, left over, unaccounted for, spoiled after printing-143; (G) Returns from news agents-none; (H) Total 1400.**

**Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor & Publisher**



# *Season's Greetings*

TO

CIRCUS FANS AND FRIENDS  
EVERYWHERE

FROM

RINGLING MUSEUM OF THE CIRCUS

OF THE

JOHN AND MABLE RINGLING MUSEUM OF ART

IN

SARASOTA, FLORIDA

WHERE A WARM WELCOME

ALWAYS AWAITS YOU

John Hurdle/Curator

Phone (813) 355-5101

# ENTERTAINMENTS ABOARD G.R. SPALDING'S CIRCUS SHOWBOAT, THE FLOATING PALACE

By Penelope Leavitt-Moy

In 1852 Gibert R. Spalding and Charles J. Rogers introduced to mid nineteenth century audiences the first fully equipped and operable showboat circus, the Floating Palace. Erected on a barge and towed by a steamboat, this unique floating amphitheatre visited towns situated on the Mississippi, Illinois, Wabash, and Ohio rivers, providing popular entertainment in a refined atmosphere to locales yet inaccessible by railroad. Improving both the status of the circus and the spectators who frequented such amusement, a measure of the Floating Palace's success is recorded in contemporary reviews, demonstrating it as a rival of the established legitimate theatres of the day:

Circus and Floating Palace—This beautiful concern, with its troupe of geniuses, has literally taken the people of the Second District by storm. The foot of Toulouse Street, where it is located, is as thronged night after night as St. Charles Street Theatre, and it is difficult to decide, from present indications, whether our Creole families most affect the French opera or the circus.<sup>1</sup>

During its prosperous seven year career under the administration of G.R. Spalding, the Floating Palace presented six individual performance seasons. This study will describe those seasons, acquainting the reader with not only the nature of the entertainments, but alerting him to a fine example of circus management (see Figure 1).

The inauguration performance given aboard the Floating Palace, March 1852, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, proclaimed "Spalding & Rogers' Circus and Great European and American Hippodrome" (see Figure 2).<sup>2</sup> Numbering 51 European and American circus artists, the afternoon and evening program concentrated largely on equestrianism, supplemented with gymnastic exercises, slack wire acts, and an intermission composed of music "A la Plantation." A typical night's offering promised:

1. Prelude—Organ—Herr Karl Fuhrman
2. Entree of Troupe and Troop, Conduit par, Mr. Perry
3. Pas Seul—Miss Virginia Lee

4. Gymnastic Exercises, led by Mr. D.W. Stone

5. Horsemanship—Necromantic—Mons. Benoit

6. Wire Volante—Equilibria—Mrs. Lake

7. Horsemanship—Principal, Miss Rosaline Stickney

8. Poses Classique Atelier Olympique, et Studio Gymnastic, Mons. Le Vater Lee et Maitre Estaphe et Jean.

9. Horsemanship, Coup d'Etat, on 4 Horses, Mr. E.S. Perry

10. Interlude, Soiree Musicale (A la Plantation), John Smith, W. Duckworth, D. Reed, and C. Crosby

11. Horsemanship, Phantasia du Cirque (with variations, without saddle or bridle), Mr. Walter Aymar

12. Equilibria Gymnastique, Mons. Le Vater Lee et Son Fils Jean.

13. Horsemanship, Tours de

Force, Le Jeune Burte et Son Cheval.

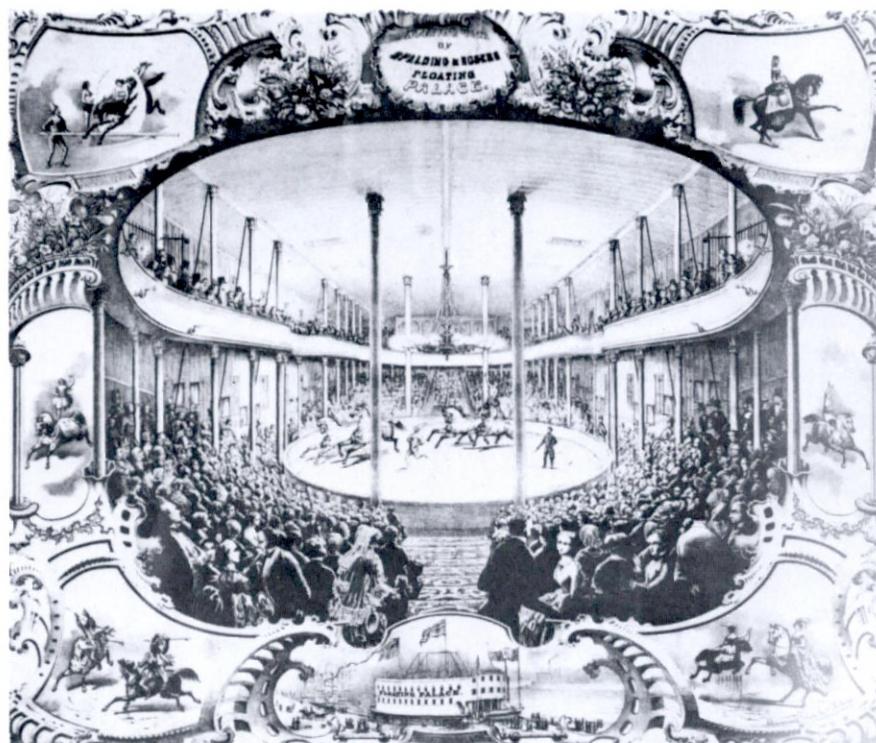
14. Tranca Hispaniola—Carlos Crosbiere.

15. FINALE.<sup>3</sup>

A patriotic pantomime appeared later in the year, emphasizing dramatic equestrianism:

The whole strength of the Company, Dramatic and Equestrian will be called in the Grand National Drama of OLD PUT! AND "MAD" ANTHONY WAYNE! OR THE SPIRIT OF '76! Abounding in Revolutionary Incidents, exciting patriotic emotions, reviving proud Reminiscences ... and hairbreadth escapes, dangers by flood and field, surprises and ambuscades, in those stirring "Times that tried men's souls," introducing Generals Putnam and Wayne, Lord Cornwallis, British and Continental Soldiers, Indians, Yankee Girls, led on by Kate Putnam; presenting, as it were a Moving Panorama, exciting ennobling sensations, and impressing more in-

Interior view of the Floating Palace.  
SOURCE: The Historic New Orleans Collection.



delibly those memorable incidents than lies in the power of pen or pencil to effect. The whole Drama will be moral and patriotic, and be concluded with a GRAND LIVING NATIONAL TABLEAUX! IN WHICH GENERAL WASHINGTON! MOUNTED ON A LIVING WAR HORSE, Weighing 1400 Pounds! Is Borne Aloft, In Triumphal Procession on the shoulders of his Brave Continentals!<sup>4</sup>

Performers noted especially for their skill in this first season include Walter Aymar, equestrian, Le Vater Lee, equestrian pantomimist and gymnast, and Charles Rogers, half owner of the Floating Palace and equestrian. In view of Rogers' position in the circus, that he received both the lengthiest notice and highest praise is perhaps not surprising. This review appeared before Rogers made his debut:

... probably the most distinguished equestrian and most accomplished circus man that the profession has ever produced. We refer to Mr. C.J. Rogers, the junior proprietor of the Floating Palace ... Without a compeer as a dramatic equestrian ... irreproachable in his social relations, he appears to be physically, mentally, and morally fitted for exerting a healthful influence among his associates.<sup>5</sup>

The following day critics considered his performance:

The addition of Mr. Rogers to the double troupe has perfected the only portion of the entertainments at which the most captious could cavil. The department of equitation requires a combination of physical and mental qualifications required in no other branch of the business. These Mr. Rogers possesses in an eminent degree. It requires not only the most consummate skill as a horseman, but the closest study as an actor. This gentleman possesses this happy combination.<sup>6</sup>

Spalding catered to individual taste, offering a large assortment of variety acts to his spectators. Even the clowns were chosen with an eye to differing types of humor. For those preferring the intellectual touch, William F. Wallett, an Englishman, based his wit-ticisms on a scholarly background:

Wallett was the beau ideal of a Touchstone. He also was a collegian, well up in standard literature, a Shakespearean student, and a

**SECOND DAY OF  
SPALDING & ROGERS'  
CIRCUS  
AND GREAT  
EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN  
AMPHITHEATRE,  
ON BOARD THE**



A GRAND FAMILY FETE AT HALF PAST 2 O'CLOCK  
**THIS AFTERNOON,**  
FOR FAMILY PARTIES AND JUVENILES.

**FASHIONABLE DRESS CIRCLE.  
ENTERTAINMENT TO-NIGHT.**

The Arm Chairs in the Dress Circle, are all numbered, and may be secured during the day, at the Box Offices, from the Purser, R. W. K. DIXON, Esq.

## **EXERCISES TO-NIGHT.**

- Prelude, Organ, HERR KARL FUHRMAN.
  - Entree of Troupe and Troop, Conduit par, M. PERRY.
  - Pas Seul, Miss VIRGINIE LEE.
  - Gymnastic Exercises, Led by MR. D. W. STONE.
  - Horsemanship, Necromantic, Mons. BENOT.
  - Wire Volante, Equilibria, MRS. LAKE.
  - Horsemanship, Principal, Miss ROSALINE STICKNEY.
  - Pose Classique, Atc're Olympique, i Studio Gymnastique, MARS LE VATER LEE et Maîtres ESTAEPHE et JEAN PISSARD ESTAEPHE.
  - Horsemanship, Coup d'Etat, en 4 Horses, Mr. E. S. PERRY.
  - Interlude, Soirée Musicale, (à la Plantation) JOSÉ SAUZI, W. DUCKWORTH, B. REED, and C. CROSBY.
  - Horsemanship, Phaneria du Cirque, (with variations without saddle or bridle) MR. WALTER ANDREAS.
  - Equilibria Gymnastique, Mons. LE VATER LEE et Son FILS JEAN.
  - Horsemanship, Tour de Force, LE JEUNE BURTE et Son CHEVAL.
  - Tranca Hispaniola, - CARLOS CROSBIER.
  - FINAL.

## **The High Price of Admission.**

*Memphis Appeal Job Office Print.*

Program for the Spalding & Rogers Circus used during the season of 1852.  
Pfening Collection.

widely read man. Wallett had all the easy assurance, gentle ways, and polish of society. He recited Shakespeare imitatively in the ring whenever he could apply it to circumstance?

William Lake, on the other hand, offset Wallett with his brilliant low comedy.

The season's entertainment was hugely successful. Audience amenities aboard the showboat exacted almost as much praise as the performers. Spalding's efforts in this direction were widely commented on.

The Floating Palace, last

evening, presented a rich array of beauty and fashion. Everyone we saw appeared to be delighted with the performance, and enjoying themselves on the luxurious seats provided by the munificent proprietors. The appearance of the Palace may be considered a new era in Equestrian Amusements provided with all the comforts and luxury sic of our finest Theatres ... the most refined ladies can witness the performance in the arena without being caused a single blush<sup>s</sup>

Spalding continually enhanced the season's fare by the addition of new acts. During the 1852-1853 circus run, he hired the Fakir of Siva, a magician, as part of the repertoire. Such tactics never failed in enlivening audience interest:

If anything can divert attention from the all-absorbing subject of election day, it will be the conjunction of the Floating Palace and the Fakir of Siva, in one exhibition, at the foot of Canal Street to-night.<sup>9</sup>

In the fall of 1853, I.A. Van Ambburgh leased the Floating Palace to house the James Raymond Menagerie Company. Profits were to be divided equally between Van Ambburgh and Spalding and Rogers.<sup>10</sup> Interior structural changes converted the showboat into an extensive zoological amphitheatre. Artfully designed cages resembling each animal's natural habitat hung from the roof of the Palace, thus affording spectators an uninterrupted view of the beasts. On a raised platform located at the front of the showboat stood the dens for the lions and tigers, and an enclosed arena. Here Van Ambburgh performed as an animal trainer:

Every visitor at the menagerie speculates upon the jeopardy Van Amburgh encounters in the den of lions and tigers ... Upon the whole, we are induced to think that his danger in the lion's den is not much greater than it would be on the boilerdeck of a high-pressure steamer. Either one of the dozen animals in this cage could annihilate him in an instant, but so far they seem to be restrained, partly by fear, and partly by affection ... His whole person is scarified, in evidence of the violence of some ... "scrimmages." A slight one of this kind happened the other night, with the Royal Bengal tiger, but was so speedily settled that but few of the audience

could have observed it, except for the alarmed appearance of the keepers.<sup>11</sup>

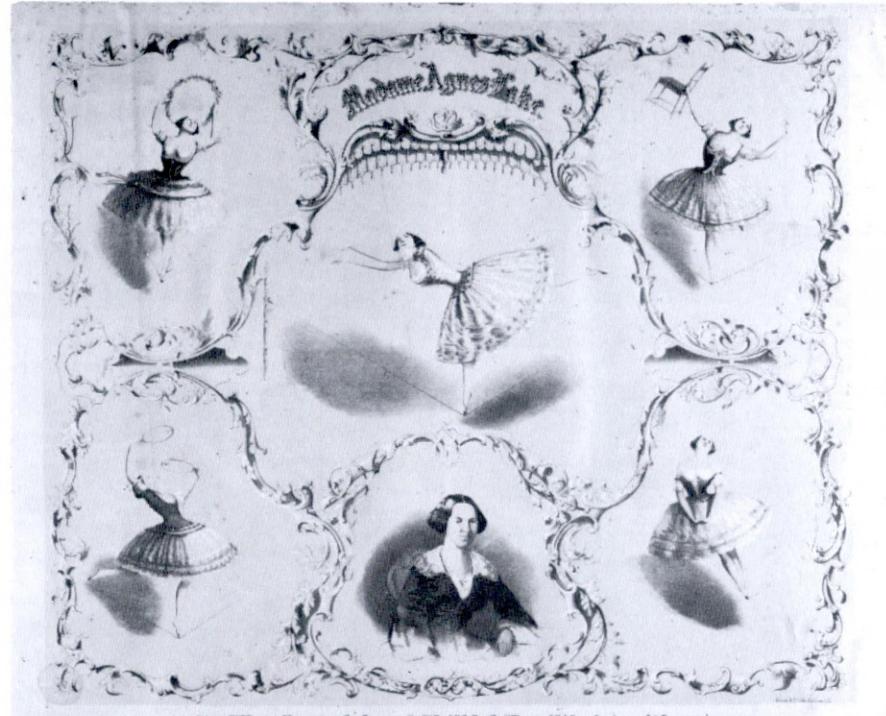
The audience could also witness, after this main attraction, the animals being fed in the afternoon, and another two acts given in a guarded arena located in the center of the Palace. First appeared costumed monkeys performing tricks on horseback, followed by Mr. Storey and his performing elephant. During act intervals the spectators were free to investigate the multi-varied samples of animal life about the rest of the Palace.<sup>12</sup> Included were "150 living specimens of Forest Beasts & Desert Monsters sic..."<sup>13</sup> The rhinoceros seemed to draw particular attention and affection, as did the elephant:

The elephant is a fine specimen of this wonderful animal. He is a very venerable looking individual, with a display of ivory surpassing any we have ever seen in an elephant's jaws. He is quite docile and affectionate, very easily won to social communication and confidence, and endeavoring with single success to make himself quite agreeable to his many visitors.<sup>14</sup>

The rhinoceros attracts fully his share of attention, too. He seems quite peaceably disposed, and pays particular devotion to his load of hay; Nebuchadnezzar's fondness for which esculent could not have been greater than his.<sup>15</sup>

Additional fare centered on new animals being put on display. One such attraction, a giraffe who had been rented from P.T. Barnum, on arriving from New York and being shipped onto the Palace at New Orleans, slipped on the ramp, fell into the water, and was drowned. A case was brought against Spalding for the loss of so precious an animal, but in time it was resolved in the manager's favor.<sup>16</sup> The carcass of the unfortunate animal was retrieved from the Mississippi, sent to a taxidermist and then put on display, in the next season's Museum.

Interestingly, Van Amburgh used two tactical drawing cards in securing an audience. The populace of both large and small towns, sometimes leery of attending this kind of amusement because of its doubtful moral nature, were persuaded from such tendencies when Van Amburgh quoted the Bible in his cause. He argued that the good book stated man's superiority over the beasts, and, like the early Christians, he was simply subjugating them to his will. Therefore, the spectator should see his performance as a greatly instructive moral lesson.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, mothers would be doing their



Agnes Lake was featured with the Spalding & Rogers Circuses for twelve years. This very rare lithograph, printed by the Gibson Litho Company of Cincinnati, Ohio, was used in the 1850s. The poster was used by the Spalding & Rogers tent circus. Original in Pfening Collection.

children a great disservice if they kept them from the Menagerie:

So fine a collection (of living animals) has never been within reach of our fellow citizens, and it may be long before another such opportunity is afforded them. They will do well, therefore, to avail themselves of it; but we cannot too strongly impress on them the great wrong that will be done to the young if they should not be allowed to derive from it all the instructive amusement it is so well calculated to afford them.<sup>18</sup>

As a second tactic, Van Amburgh threatened his retirement:

As Mr. Van Amburgh contemplates retiring upon the fame he has acquired in Europe and this Country, and as it is not reasonable to suppose that so extensive and superb a Collection will ever again be brought together... and if collected, could only reach the river towns by this conveyance—it is not presumptuous to assume that this Zoological Tour will excite universal interest.<sup>19</sup>

This notice, dated 1853, seems precipitous in the face of a future advertisement announcing his Menagerie once again in 1858.<sup>20</sup>

Artistically and financially, Van Amburgh's eighteen month run on the Floating Palace was successful. However, due to some mishaps, such as the showboat running aground several times, and the escape of some of the animals, his two year contract was cut short by Spalding. His concern in "running a tight ship" was too great to allow even the accidental incident.<sup>21</sup>

Spalding next outfitted the showboat as a vast Museum. Purchasing the Albany Museum's collection, wax-works of famous figures, including the Empress Josephine, Napoleon, Lafayette, Shakespeare's Desdemona, Othello and Iago were in evidence, having been modeled from the sculptor Canova's work. 150 oil paintings hung from the walls of the Gallery, with subjects such as The Millennium, Delilah betraying Samson to the Philistines, Bluebeard, Fantima, and a host of other distinguished ladies and gentlemen. The main floor exhibited representatives of the animal world, from the most stupendous to the most insignificant. Artifacts and relics from ancient Egypt, Rome and Herculaneum, artistically arranged in front of a panoramic view of the world occupied another section of the Museum. To help acquaint the spectators with the collection, a fully operable printing press, also aboard, delivered a paper describing the history of some of the objects.<sup>22</sup> For-



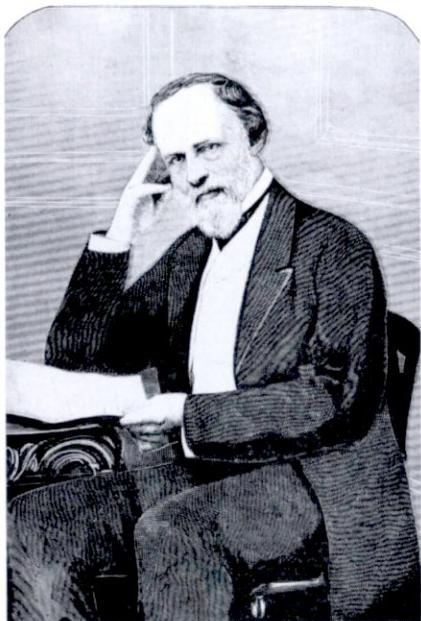
cat-like up his back, and in the twinkling of an eye stood in a reversed position on Dunbar's head—then bounded ten feet onto the floor.

Dunbar and Magilton were originals of the triple scenes of the Perch Trapeze and Ladders. Mr. Dunbar balanced a heavy flexible pole, upon the top of which was placed a ladder, formed like an obelisk, and upon the last round of the ladder, the trapeze was suspended. Henry Magilton and Harry Bartine ascended the pole and mounted the ladders; alighting from the ladders, they assumed positions on the trapeze, there executing a series of wonders. The combined weights of the pole, apparatus and men were sustained by Mr. George Dunbar, who, as an equilibrist, had no equal in the world.<sup>28</sup>

Certainly the season's success is well documented in the following review:

But what above all other things distinguishes it from its contemporaries, is said to be the number and unexampled skill of its performers, and the rare training of its numberless trick, ring, and performing horses and ponies. Frank Barry, supposed to be the best equestrian in the world, turns backward somersets and pirouettes over objects and through balloons, on a bareback horse at full

**Portrait of G.R. Spalding.** SOURCE:  
The Harvard Theatre Collection.



speed.—That lucus naturae, the Man Monkey, bewilders the audience with fear and wonder, in his indescribable and original feats of equestrian gymnastics.

The whole magnificent affair is conducted by Mr. Rogers in person, who joins with the reputation as the Ducrow of America. Messrs. Spalding & Rogers have a European as well as American reputation, as the Napoleons of the Circus, and it is supposed that they have more capital engaged in the prosecution of their circus enterprises, than all the other circus managers combined. Three of their showboats, the Floating Palace, James Raymond, and Banjo, are said alone to have cost \$200,000.<sup>29</sup>

Composed of both new and old artists, and named "Spalding and Rogers' New Orleans Circus" in honor of that city and the amphitheatre they operated there, the next season's entertainment announced:

#### SPALDING & ROGERS' NEW ORLEANS CIRCUS

A new Equestrian, Gymnastic and Acrobatic combination, gotten up expressly for the fastidious amusement goers of the Crescent City, and to be known hereafter, in their summer tours at the North, as the "New Orleans Circus," and to be the FIRST AND BEST CIRCUS IN THE WORLD, as long as experience, tact and money can secure its present organization, composed, as it is, of the elite of the FRENCH, ENGLISH AND AMERICAN CIRCUSES, selected by especial agents during the past summer.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to the regular circus acts, Spalding hired, at enormous expense, two performing elephants, Victoria and Albert. Again, the novelty of such an affair drew tremendous crowds and was widely reviewed by enthusiastic critics:

... have been for several years the most notable features in Europe, having excited an immense sensation in London, Paris, Vienna, New York and Philadelphia ... They have been taught to ascend an inclined plane only nine inches wide, a distance of thirty yards, where one of them stands on his head, in mid air, on a platform only twelve inches in diameter, while the other plays clown to the feat; one plays on an organ while the other dances

## Spalding & Rogers' Circus FLOATING PALACE.

EQUESTRIAN DIRECTOR --- Mr. E S. PERRY.  
MAITRE DE CIRQUE --- MR. H. F. NICHOLS.  
CLOWNS, MR. JOHN GOSSIN & MR. BILL LAKE.  
ORGANIST ----- HERR KARL FURHMAN.  
PURSER ----- MR. R. W. K. DIXON.

### PROGRAMME THIS EVENING.

- 1.—Musical Selections, Organ, ..... Herr Karl Furhman
- 2.—Entree of the Troup and Troupe
- 3.—Gymnastic Exercises, ..... Led by Mr. D. W. Stone.
- 4.—Equitation, Trick Act ..... Mons. Benoit.
- 5.—Trick Act, ..... Mr. D. W. Stone.
- 6.—Equestrian Scene ..... Mr. D. W. Stone.
- 7.—Wire Valante ..... Mrs. W. Lake.
- 8.—Voices Musicales, a la Plantation. John Smith, E. Duckworth, D. Reed, and C. Crosby.
- 9.—Equitation, Principal Act ..... Madame Benoit (late Miss Roseline Stickney.)
- 10.—Pases Classique, Atelier Olympique et Studio Gymnastique, Mons. Le Vater Lee, et Maitres Jean et Sophie Lee, Francois Barth et son Cheval.
- 11.—Phantasmagoria du Cirque ..... Le Jeune Barto et son Cheval.
- 12.—Trenca Hispanola ..... Mr. Ciss, Crosby.
- 13.—Tours de Force, 4 Horses ..... Mr. E. S. Perry.
- 14.—Finale, Dramatis Personae ..... by Company.

To-morrow, positively, last day of the Palace in this City.

To-morrow afternoon, a Grand Family Fete at half-past 2.

\* \* To-morrow night, first appearance of the great Le Vater Lee Troupe, in Feats of wonderful Equilibrium.

Eligible Dress Circle Chairs may be secured every day at the Office of the Floating Palace, Galt House, and Louisville Hotel.

Louisville Courier Print.

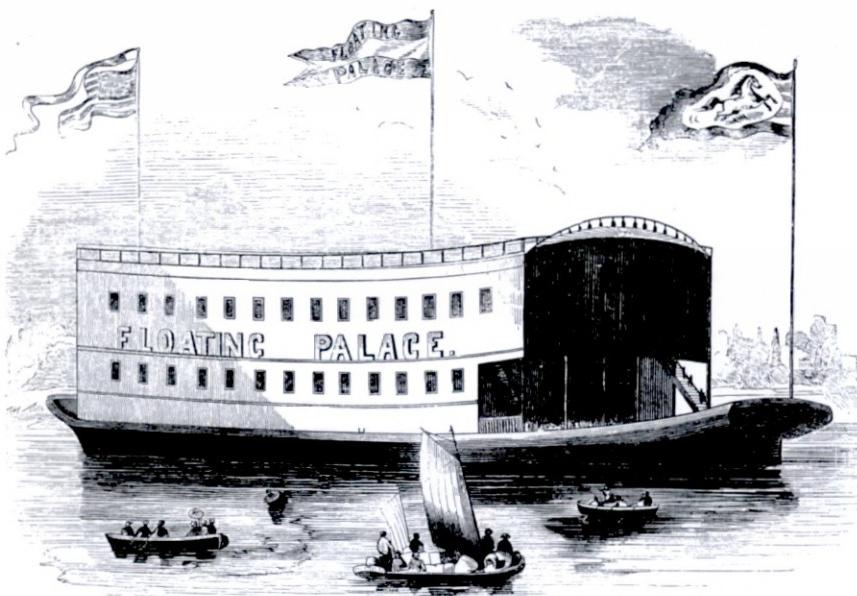
**Program used by the Spalding & Rogers Floating Palace during a Louisville, Ky. engagement during the 1856 season.** Pfening Collection.

to the music; and a variety of antics, astounding feats in dancing, waltzing, gymnastics and marching, of which there is not room here for description, and are hardly credible when described.<sup>31</sup>

Although the elephants drew the most notice, the reviews on the performance as a whole were equally complimentary, and once again praised the elegant establishment, thus crediting Spalding for his continued maintenance of both the showboat and the entertainment:

The Floating Palace—This place of amusement was attended yesterday by a large concourse of citizens, who were highly pleased with the novel and astonishing character of the exhibitions. The riding was extraordinary—the gymnastics extraordinary—the elephant performance extraordinary—in fact, everything about the Floating Palace is extraordinary ... The seats were elegant and comfortable and everything goes off in the most satisfactory manner.<sup>32</sup>

At this point in the Floating Palace's career, with its fame and fortune already established, consideration of



the qualities that made it a success were still of prime importance to its manager.

Three new acts were added to the "New Orleans Circus," including Mr. Lenton, whose specialty consisted of walking the ceiling in a reversed position like a fly, the Siamese Twins, and a pantomime entitled *Jack The Giant Killer*, with all costumes, scenery and other necessary attributes to perform it in grand style.<sup>33</sup>

"Spalding & Rogers' European Circus" marks the final entertainment season aboard the Floating Palace. No doubt due to the increasing hostilities in the South prior to the Civil War, not many advertisements exist announcing this circus. The few notices that do mention it are favorable, and there is no reason to believe it would not have lived up to former performances.

The Floating Palace, as an entertainment medium enjoyed unqualified success. Spalding's high standards and stern measures ensured the spectators first-class performers in a much diversified program. His entertainments provided for all classes of people and catered to individual tastes. In an age when the circus was thought to be second rate entertainment, given in rude and uncomfortable surroundings, Spalding supplied elegance and prestige to his floating establishment (see Figure 3). Assured of excellent amusement in a refined atmosphere, Spalding's audiences rewarded his unflagging efforts by revisiting the showboat each time it appeared, thus assuring a consistent financial return. Finally, the structural uniqueness of the Floating Palace should be considered. Never before had such an amusement facility been attempted. Its success provides a fine example of

**Spalding and Rogers' Floating Palace.**  
From "Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion," April 1853.  
**SOURCE:** The Theatre Collection, the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

innovative mid nineteenth century popular entertainment.

#### NOTES

1. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 18 October 1852.
2. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 7 September 1852.
3. Herald dated 1852 from the Harry Hertzberg Circus Collection, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas.
4. Herald dated 1852 from the Evansville Museum of Arts and Sciences, Evansville, Indiana.
5. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 20 November 1852.

6. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 21 November 1852.

7. John A. Dingess, Handwritten Manuscript on the Circus, ca., 1890, Harry Hertzberg Circus Collection, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas.

8. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 15 September 1852.

9. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 2 November 1852.

10. John A. Dingess, Handwritten Manuscript on the Circus, ca., 1890, Harry Hertzberg Circus Collection, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas.

11. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 18 January 1854.

12. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 21 November 1853.

13. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 21 November 1853.

14. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 18 January 1854.

15. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 19 January 1854.

16. John A. Dingess, Handwritten Manuscript on the Circus, ca., 1890, Harry Hertzberg Circus Collection, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas.

17. Elbert Russel Bowen, *Theatrical Entertainments in Rural Missouri before the Civil War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1959), p. 21.

18. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 8 January 1854.

19. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 21 November 1853.

20. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 13 November 1858.

21. John A. Dingess, Handwritten Manuscript on the Circus, ca., 1890, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas.

22. John A. Dingess, Handwritten Manuscript on the Circus, ca., 1890, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas.

23. Ralph Keeler, *Vagabond Adventures* (Boston: Fields, Osgood & Co., 1870), pp. 184-186.

24. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 9 January 1856.

25. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 8 April 1856.

26. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 22 March 1857.

27. John A. Dingess, Handwritten Manuscript on the Circus, ca., 1890, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas.

28. John A. Dingess, Handwritten Manuscript on the Circus, ca., 1890, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas.

29. John A. Dingess, Handwritten Manuscript on the Circus, ca., 1890, San Antonio Public Library, San Antonio, Texas.

30. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 4 October 1857.

31. *Natchez Daily Courier*, 3 December 1857.

32. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 25 November 1857.

33. *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 28 March 1858.

## CIRCUS CHRISTMAS GIFTS KEEP ON GIVING!!!

### THIS GALAXY OF GREAT CIRCUS BOOKS BY CHAPPIE FOX HAVE ALL THE QUALIFICATIONS.

"A Ticket To The Circus," Pub. 1959, by Chappie .....	\$10.00
"Picture History of Perform. Horses," by Chappie .....	\$10.95
"The Circus In Amer." with Tom Parkinson, 1969 .....	\$20.00
"The Great Circus Street Par. In Pictures"	
Chappie with F. Beverly Kelley, 1978 .....	\$ 5.00
"American Circus Posters in Full Color" by Chappie, 1978 .....	\$ 7.50
**"The Circus Moves By Rail" Tom Parkinson with Chappie, 1978....	\$35.00
"Old Time Circus Cuts," A Pictorial Archive of 202 Illustrations, Chappie 1979 .....	\$ 5.50

\*Expensive yes, but its large size, 8½ x 10¼ inc, its 400 photos, most never before published and its 352 pages of thrilling words describing it all, makes it equal to two or more great books—two or more great circus classics.

Send 50 cents Stamps or Cash for complete list of Desirable Circus Collectables. Refundable on first order.

We wish you the merriest Christmas  
and the most prosperous New Year ever!

BETTY SCHMID

485 Sleepy Hollow Road

Pittsburgh, PA 15228



## WARMEST SEASON'S GREETINGS

To all Circus Historical Society Members  
from  
Circus City Festival Inc.  
P.O. Box 482  
Peru, Indiana

One of Americas oldest and biggest Amateur Circus  
Now in our 21st year  
1980 Festival week July 16th thru 19th  
Tickets now available  
Circus Parade July 19th

SEE YOU AT THE CIRCUS!

Gift Shop

Circus Museum

# The Original Miss Daisy

By Berry L. Dubuque

The first reference to the Hodginis in the United States is 1902, but records show the Hodginis presence in European circuses dating back to 1800.<sup>1</sup> When Albert Hodgini came to the United States, he came as a bachelor without family or troupe, and for two years, he worked alone. This article will examine Albert's background, his arrival in this country, and the act that made him a featured performer in European and American circuses. While the scope of this research project does not include a study of the Hodginis in Europe, a few facts are significant in considering the Hodginis who came to the United States and will be examined.

First their actual name is not Hodgini; it is Hodges. The "ini" ending was picked up four generations ago.<sup>2</sup> Samuel Hodges, an English circus performer, sired nine children, five of whom followed him professionally, and three of these five eventually started their own circuses in different countries throughout Europe.<sup>3</sup> One of the three children, Thomas, went to Italy where he started a circus and changed Hodges to Hodgini to make the show seem more Italian. Exactly why the other family members adopted the "ini" is unclear, but they did. Albert Hodgini, Jr. (Bertie) theorizes the rationale was economically and politically motivated. The name stated is difficult to pin down to one nationality and can alternately serve as Italian, Russian, Jewish, or Balkan. Hodges, however, is distinctively English and potentially abrasive if used in some countries. "Hodgini" could be used safely in any country. With it, the Hodginis could play more places and thus earn more money. Also the name is certainly more impressive than Hodges and perhaps easier to remember. The name, however, is strictly a show business name and has never legally been changed. Their legal papers (deeds, passports, licenses, etc.) are still recorded as Hodges even though the family has used Hodgini for more than one hundred years.

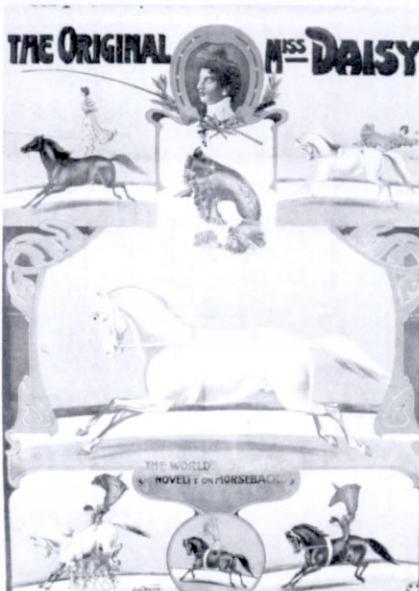
Second, the Hodginis have worked in every type of act known to circus, but bareback riding was their forte in Europe and remained so in the United States. The Hodginis started as street acrobats and jugglers, but after the 1850's they were noted for their equestrian skills with the other skills incorporated into the riding acts. These acts were good enough that the Hodginis worked for the best Euro-

pean circuses of the day including, among others, circuses Krone, Busch, and Schumann in all countries of Europe.<sup>4</sup> That the Hodginis played those circuses attests to the fact that they were first-rate performers. Thus in 1881, when Albert Victor Joseph-Henry Hodgini was born in Birmingham, England he had a long line of tradition to follow.<sup>5</sup>

Being a member of an established family does have some advantages especially in circuses, because the performer is born into an act and automatically trained to perform in the act. Also he will begin his training and performing as soon as he is physically able; audiences adore young children doing stunts. Conversely, an outsider who runs away to join a circus is considerably older when he comes into the circus than the youngster of a performing family, and the outsider must still find someone willing to accept him as an apprentice. Usually the outsider must wait until a performer drops out of an act and hope he will be chosen to go into the act as apprentice replacement.

If the outsider is chosen (no guarantee there) he will spend at least a season learning the basic act and more difficult stunts require even more time providing the outsider has

This color lithograph of Miss Daisy was printed in Berlin, Germany, and was used by Albert Hodgini when he first arrived in the United States. Author's collection.



the ability to learn them. Briefly this means that a performer born into a circus family can be a star performer by his late teens, whereas the outsider will just be starting a circus career.

This was exactly the situation of Albert Hodgini. When Albert came to the United States in 1907 at age twenty-six, he had already established himself as a head-lining performer in Europe in both circuses and variety shows—the European version of vaudeville.<sup>6</sup> Playing variety theatres, he used the name "Jimmy James, England's Greatest Comedian," and his promotional stationery indicates (figure 2) he received excellent billing. The dates from a few of the billboard posters pictured on the stationery are informative. They indicate Albert also performed as Jimmy James in this country, most likely immediately after coming to the United States and during the three occasions his wife was pregnant. Tremendously talented, Albert could juggle, work tight-rope, ride straight or comedy bareback, train animal acts, do hand and head balancing, acrobatic tumbling, sing, dance, and act as well as tell funny stories professionally.

Albert was well educated, cultured, and fluent in five languages, and numbered royalty among his friends.<sup>7</sup> The European nobility appreciated fine horses and horsemanship; thus friendships extended across the social strata. A favorite heirloom of the Hodgini family is a particularly fine gold watch Albert received from the Crown Prince of Germany in appreciation of Albert's friendship and exceptional riding prowess (figure 3).

When Albert came to the United States in 1907, he came to work at the New York Hippodrome in New York City.<sup>8</sup> The Hippodrome was a huge theatre that two men, Messrs. Thompson and Dundee, owned and managed.<sup>9</sup> Their specialty was producing huge vaudeville extravaganzas with several immense production numbers built around a central theme and mixed with unique smaller acts.<sup>10</sup> Pictures from 1906 program indicate that the amounts of people, scenery, and costumes to complement the theme also were grandiose. As the program illustrates, the state had the capability to produce waterfalls, rain, and other special effects.<sup>11</sup> It could easily handle any type of circus act, and this was often the case. In its shows and facilities, the Hippodrome was a Radio City Music Hall or Follies Bergere of the early 1900's in New York City.



Gold watch given to Albert Hodgini by Crown Prince Rupprecht of Germany. Author's collection.

Unfortunately, a problem arises about the working relationship between Albert Hodgini and the New York Hippodrome. A small news item in the *Billboard* weekly magazine relates that Albert Hodgini was joining the Ringling Bros. Circus in 1908, having left the Hippodrome.<sup>12</sup> The news item, however, fails to relate the type of act Albert performed in the Hippodrome. He could have been working either as Jimmy James the comedian, or as himself, Albert Hodgini, in a principal riding act. The latter is probably the truth, but until a Hippodrome program from 1907 can be found, the question remains unanswered.

In 1908 Albert joined the Ringling Bros. Circus. The two shows were not combined until 1919, and until then John Ringling sent out both shows on different routes.<sup>14</sup> Thus, Albert never worked on the Barnum and Bailey circus, the only major circus of his time he missed. During the seven years Albert worked for the Ringling Bros. show, he proved himself a valuable asset. He performed seven different acts on the Ringling show at different times and trained several others, some of which were first for the United States. In addition to performing in the spring and summer months, Albert spent the winter months dividing his time playing vaudeville circuits and training new acts for the show at the winter quarters in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

The "Original Miss Daisy" was perhaps the foremost act Albert performed on the Ringling show. A critic's review of the 1909 show states: "Daisy Hodgini, whom many mistook for a man, proved a sensation. She vaulted over horseback with such agility and ease, and a rapidity that

made it seem impossible for a woman to do—a graceful feature of the act being a manipulation of a chair in a bareback demonstration."<sup>15</sup> Two points are notable in this clipping. First, apparently some of the audience did not believe Miss Daisy was a woman, but not because the disguise was imperfect, only that the stunts were too difficult for a woman. The reviewer disagreed. His use of "... mistook for a man ..." indicates he believed Miss Daisy was indeed a woman. The reviewer was wrong and the audience correct, albeit for the wrong reason. This was a common error, and Miss Daisy often generated the same controversy, but only on the issue of feminine ability, never the disguise. Figure 4 explains why.

The other notable point of the clipping is the amount of space devoted to Miss Daisy. Generally circus reviews discuss the show as a whole and leave out discussion of individual acts except for honorable mentions to the best acts. Discussion of an act means that act was outstanding. "Miss Daisy's" review, especially in comparison with the other acts of the Ringling show, testifies to its greatness.

Miss Daisy began her act by being assisted to the bare back of the horse, where she commenced riding side seat (side saddle) for a couple of revolutions of the forty-two foot ring.<sup>16</sup> Next she slid back to the rump of the horse to ride side saddle, which is more difficult because the rider is seated directly over the horse's hind legs. Keep in mind that all of this riding is done free—no holding any reins. From

**Albert Hodgini, as Miss Daisy, is pictured on the right on Ringling Bros. Circus in 1914. Josephine Clarke is on the left. Pfening collection.**

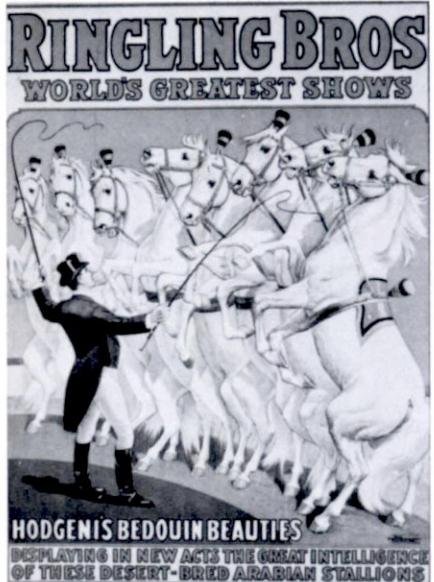


here Miss Daisy switched to facing front on her knees and then to one knee up and one down, and finally to a standing position. After this "Daisy" turned around, riding backwards to the direction of the horse's movement. Finally, she turned back around to the front, dropped to side saddle and off the horse to take her first bow and catch her breath. This ended the first part of her act and contained nothing difficult, nothing other women riding bareback did not do. This was just the point the first part of the act was supposed to make—that Miss Daisy was just another woman performing her act.

With her femininity established, Miss Daisy leaped up again to the horse's back, commencing the tricks other woman did not do. First came several "jerks," a basic acrobatic skill which consists of kicking up to a handstand, bending the legs at the knees, and then quickly whipping the legs down to land on the feet again, the body in an upright position. Done on the ground, the trick is not particularly difficult; on a moving, bouncing horse's back it is exceedingly so.

The "jerks" were followed by a standing, backwards, aerial tucked somersault. Obviously difficult and dangerous, the stunt is made more difficult by the fact that it must be done gaining ground to stay abreast of the horse's forward movement. Done in the full-length dress, the stunt must have been a crowd pleaser and concluded part two of the act.

The somersault, however, was not the climax of the act. The third part began with juggling, a stock part of all the Hodgini riding acts. At some point juggling or another related hand-eye coordination skill such as marksmanship, whip cracking, or knife throwing was performed that



Hodgini also presented a liberty horse act with the Ringling show, as well as doing the Miss Daisy routine. This litho was used in 1912 and 1913. Circus World Museum collection.

required the rider to divert his concentration from his riding to the extent that his riding must be automatic, the body making corrections with the slightest amount of thinking. The reader may gain an insight into the difficulty of riding and juggling by imagining himself attempting to jump-rope while tossing and catching a ball. Miss Daisy used bottles and then plates in her act. When she finished the juggling, Miss Daisy began her running and vaulting maneuvers. Running just behind and to the right of the horse's tail, Miss Daisy grabbed the base of the tail, vaulted forward and up with both feet together and over the rump of the horse. This vault was repeated several times as the horse ran around the ring.

Now came the climax. The attendant handed Miss Daisy a chair on which she proceeded to sit, first facing front, and then backwards while riding the horse. She then turned front again and began using the chair as a jump-rope, jumping back and forth over it (still in her long dress). This was the "...graceful manipulation of a chair ..." the reviewer mentioned.<sup>17</sup>

To finish the act, Miss Daisy, as do all riding acts, utilized some "flash" tricks—fast, flashy, and crowd pleasing, but rarely difficult tricks. Miss Daisy combined ground tumbling with vaulting back up to the horse's back. Riding around the ring, she picked one spot as a reference point. When she came around again and arrived at that spot, she did an "Arabian"—half cartwheel aerial, half front somersault—off the horse. As soon as she landed she ran and did a round-off,

backwards somersault. The round-off is a preparation trick, much like a cartwheel except the feet get together on top and come down together. The round-off changes the body's direction of movement from forward to backward; and all backwards tumbling tricks begin with it. Thus, when Miss Daisy finished her somersault she was facing the spot from which she had begun. She immediately ran back to the spot and vaulted up on the horse which had continued around the ring.

Immediately this sequence of Arabian, run, round-off somersault, run, and vault was repeated three or four times. Performed correctly, there should be no time lag between landing out of the round-off somersault and beginning the run to meet the horse. The final somersault was done higher and upon landing Miss Daisy took her final bows and exited the ring.

Albert performed the Miss Daisy act from 1908 through 1914 in the Ringling show, and each year the act enjoyed excellent reviews. Usually the reviews were terse as in 1908: "Daisy Hodgini, in the next number proved her title of one of the greatest horsewomen in the world."<sup>18</sup> A newspaper mention denoted quality, and the majority of acts received a name-only acknowledgement.

The most interesting of these reviews was written in 1910 and is in two parts. The first part is devoted strictly to Miss Daisy, and the reviewer was certainly impressed: "When the equestrians trot into their respective positions for display #4, a rider called Daisy Hodgini at once gets the lion's share of the attention. This act is wonderfully good and in it is seen some of the most striking vaulting and riding ever before witnessed."<sup>19</sup> The second part of the review concerns an act later in show billed as "The Two Hodginis" featuring Albert's two apprentices, cousin-apprentice Joe Hodgini and Adolph Gemperlain. "The two Hodginis do some clean tricks while on horseback, and neatly handle tennis balls, rubber footballs, and catch apples on a rapier while riding. The resemblance between one of these good-looking fellows and the Daisy Hodgini who is earlier on the bill is startling, to say the least. Daisy acts just as one would expect the young chap in this act to do were he imitating the 'infernal feminine'. Oh, You!"<sup>20</sup> The reviewer was wrong again. Albert put this act together for his apprentices, but did not appear in it. The reviewer mistook Joe for Albert. Miss Daisy's identity was still safe.

The Miss Daisy act established Albert as a featured performer in this country, as it had in Europe, and it continued the Hodgini tradition of top acts in the best circuses. Top acts earn high salaries, and "Miss Daisy" earned \$125.00 per week in 1908. Albert came to this country as an established

star to further his career, and Miss Daisy served noted that he would accomplish his aims. More than that, Miss Daisy set a pattern for the top quality acts the Hodginis would bring to American circuses the next thirty years.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. "Under the Big Tops," *Billboard*, 12 April 1902, p. 19.

2. Interview with Albert (Bertie) Hodgini, Hodgini School of Dance and Gymnastics, Evansville, Indiana, 20 December 1974.

3. Interview with Joe Hodgini, Sr., Venice, Florida, 4 June 1976.

4. Albert Hodgini Family Albums, Hodgini School of Dance and Gymnastics, Evansville, Indiana.

5. Interview with Albert (Bertie) Hodgini, Hodgini School of Dance and Gymnastics, Evansville, Indiana, 20 December 1974.

6. Albert Hodgini Family Albums, Hodgini School of Dance and Gymnastics, Evansville, Indiana.

7. Interview with Albert (Bertie) Hodgini, Hodgini School of Dance and Gymnastics, Evansville, Indiana, 20 December 1974.

8. New York Hippodrome 1906 Program, Archives collection at Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. "Under the Big Tops," *Billboard*, 15 February 1908, p. 19.

13. Henry Ringling North and Alden Hatch, *The Circus Kings*, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1960), p. 107.

14. Ibid., p. 120.

15. "Under the Big Tops," *Billboard*, 3 April 1909, p. 17.

16. The diameter of the ring derives from the fact that forty-two feet best suits the running gait of the horse needed to ride bareback.

17. "Under the Big Tops," *Billboard* 3 April 1909, p. 17.

18. "Under the Big Tops," *Billboard* 11 April 1908, p. 18.

19. "Under the Big Tops," *Billboard* 16 April 1910, p. 12.

20. Ibid.

Miss Daisy was a feature of the Hodgini Great European Shows during its tour in 1915. This newspaper ad was used for a Baraboo, Wis. date. Pfening collection.

**HODGINI'S GREAT EUROPEAN SHOWS**

FIRST APPEARANCE IN AMERICA AN ALL STAR ORGANIZATION

**CLOWNS — CLOWNS**  
The Creators of All Marvelous Clown Displays  
**NEW FEATURES** — **MISS DAISY**  
Starlings — Somethin' — Life-Risking  
Aerial Feats  
Phantom of Europe  
Greatest Acrobatic Stars  
— **LADIES AND CHILDREN**  
The Tremendous Spectacle — **PICKET and POCKET** — Greatest Production in the World  
Carrots & Beets and a Whole Host of People are Required to Produce this Marvelous Collection  
— **CLEAN DRY COMFORTABLE SEATS FOR ALL**  
REMEMBER THE DAY AND DATE  
Make this a Holiday—Let Industry and Commerce Pause—Let the whole community grasp this golden opportunity.

**2 PERFORMANCES DAILY AT 2 and 3 P.M.**  
Children Adults  
Prices: 25¢ and 50¢ Fri., June 25

**WILL EXHIBIT AT**  
**Circus Grounds BARABOO**  
**FREE OUTSIDE EXHIBITION**  
BROADWAY IN PURCHASEMENT



**Frank McClosky Dead**

Well known circus manager and owner Frank McClosky died on November 8, 1979, in Winter Park, Fla., following a long bout with cancer. He has been co-owner of the Clyde Beatty Circus since 1956. McClosky and Walter Kernan, with other investors purchased the Clyde Beatty railroad circus during the summer of 1956, reopening the show on rails for a successful season. In 1957 they converted the show to trucks.

In the late 1920s McClosky joined out with the Ringling-Barnum Circus in the rigging department. He became Lillian Leitzels personal rigger and was with her at the time of her fall and death in

Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1931. He returned to the Ringling organization in various positions and in 1944 was manager of the Clyde Beatty-Russell Bros. show and in 1945 managed the Russell Bros. Pan-Pacific Circus. He returned to Ringling again in 1947 as boss of the property department. From 1948 to 1953 he was manager of the big show, and in 1954 was named general manager.

Following the death of his partner,

Walter Kernam, he was fully in charge of the management of the Beatty show as well as King Bros. and Sells & Gray circuses, also operated by the same corporation.

In recent years McClosky's health did not allow active involvement in the operation of the Beatty show. His remaining partner Jerry Collins stepped in to move the show into the 1979 season. Following McClosky's death Collins acquired total ownership of the show.

#### MERRY CHRISTMAS AND "HAPPY NEW YEAR" TO ALL

CHS members try a new hobby for 1980. Subscribe to "TODAY IS CIRCUS DAY...?" keep up with the movements of Circuses from their Winter Quarters. Watch the route of leading Circuses as they near YOUR STATE. After they enter your state watch the route as they come to your City or nearby. Don't be disappointed like you were last Season, when you found out too late.

Write for FREE SAMPLES before you subscribe. Compare these routes with others. Route sheets are published weekly, and this is the "World's Only Consolidated Weekly Circus Route Sheet". (PHONE 404/881-1488)

(C.H.S. No. 10)

CHARLIE CAMPBELL  
150 - 10th Street N.E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

## SEASONS GREETINGS



From The Staff and Personnel

Of CARSON & BARNES CIRCUS

## AT LAST! AN AUTHENTIC CIRCUS NOVEL.

WRITTEN BY ANOTHER MAN WHO WAS THERE.

### FIRST OF MAY. \$5.95 A NEW CIRCUS NOVEL

By CHARLES F. HILL, an old time circus trouper.

Carnival publishers of Sarasota was set up to publish books about outdoor show business by the McKennons only. We are changing that policy in order to publish a novel, FIRST OF MAY, by Charles F. Hill. Mr. Hill, another man who was there, has captured the magic of a medium sized circus of the early 1920s. This 300 page soft cover book will be available November 1, 1978.

### SPECIAL PRICE \$5.00

If ordered before December 31, 1978.

## CARNIVAL PUBLISHERS OF SARASOTA

NOW HAVE BOOKS ON ALL THREE MAJOR SECTORS  
OF OUTDOOR AMUSEMENT BUSINESS

### A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN CARNIVAL,

By Joe McKennon

L. C. #72-85200

400 pages	442 Photographs	8½x11
Hard Cover	\$15.95	
Soft Cover		
(2 Volumes) @	4.95 each	
Complete Set	9.00	

**HORSE DUNG TRAIL**, A Saga of the American Circus,  
By Joe McKennon L. C. #75-16053

528 Pages	102 Illustrations	6x9
48 page glossary of circus terms		
Hard Cover Only	\$12.50	

**TENT SHOW**, By Marian L. McKennon  
192 Pages 5½x8

Hard Cover	\$4.50
Soft Cover	2.50

*Mckennon Books  
have now been  
ordered by readers  
in 19 countries on  
5 continents*  
*Joe*

**LOGISTICS OF THE AMERICAN CIRCUS**, by Joe McKennon  
112 pages dozens of photographs \$4.95

Checks or Money Orders Please

**FIRST OF MAY.** \$5.95  
By CHARLES F. HILL, an old time circus trouper.

Order from  
CARNIVAL PUBLISHERS of Sarasota  
P. O. Box 295  
Sarasota, Florida 33578

## Some Observations Concerning ...

# BARNUM & BAILEY, LTD.

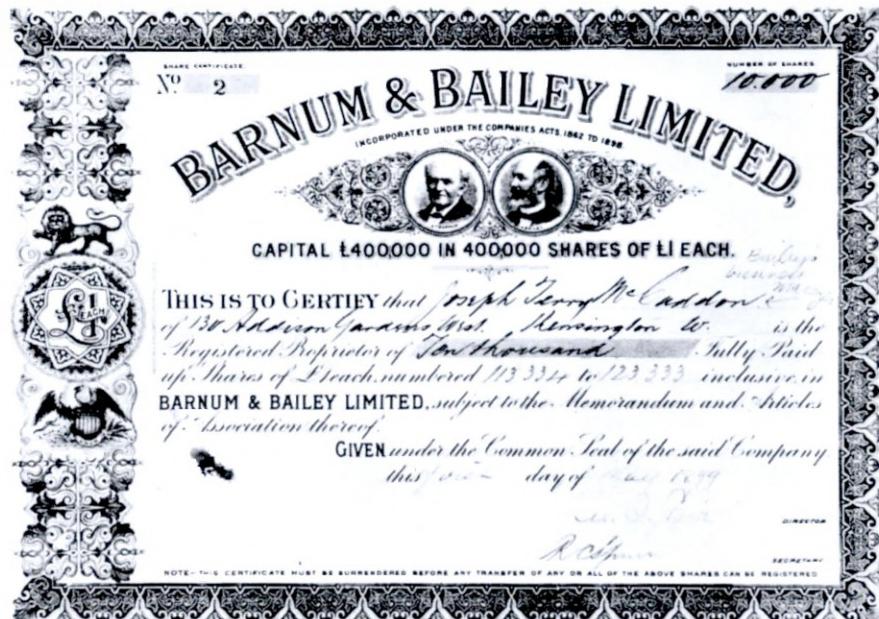
By John Lentz

London, England, February 13, 1899.  
"James A. Bailey, sole owner and manager of Barnum & Bailey, has announced that 'The Greatest Show on Earth' will become a permanent British institution with headquarters in London and winter quarters in Stoke-on-Trent. He also stated that his property would be converted into a limited partnership whose business would be conducted as Barnum & Bailey, Ltd."

Following this terse announcement to the press, Mr. Bailey elaborated on his plans as follows: "The immense success of my show in Great Britain and her provinces justifies the course of action which I am taking. While my patriotism and loyalty to my own country remain unquestioned, I am, to a large extent, transferring my business with its thousand employees to a friendly country, and making a large investment of capital as well. I am interested in several other amusement enterprises in the United States and may occasionally revisit my own country to look after them. But, after a residence of over a year in the United Kingdom, I feel more than justified in carrying out my intention of locating my business in this country permanently. I intend to conduct it along the same lines which I have used successfully in the United States for nearly a half century."

The question arises: Why did Mr. Bailey, at the peak of his career, decide to "go public"? Attorneys to whom this question has been put have given these off-hand legal opinions. One is that Mr. Bailey sought outside finances for an expansion of his circus activities. At least there are hints in the records that he so intended. Another and perhaps a more likely assumption is that he grasped the personal or financial safeguards inherent in a limited partnership. That is, he recognized that his own liability would be greatly reduced should the circus ever come upon hard times. It is clear, however, that Barnum & Bailey, Ltd. was established for a number of reasons—some financial, some not—as will be seen later in this article.

It was highly unusual for Mr. Bailey to make such a frank and candid statement to the press, as quoted above, regarding his business plans. Indeed, his remarks were said to be "contrary to his well-known habit of never divulging his intentions to anyone, not even his most confidential and trusted agents." Apparently, he broke his



This stock certificate of the English company was issued to Joseph T. McCaddon, who held 10,000 of the original shares. It is dated May 1, 1899. Courtesy of the Hoblitzelle Theatre Arts Collection, Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

habit of secrecy in order to squelch—once and for all—rumors and speculations about the length of time the circus would remain in Great Britain. Also, his statement may have been a part of his strategy leading to floating Barnum & Bailey as a limited company. Since Mr. Bailey repeatedly stressed that the show would locate permanently in England, it stands to reason that the stock offering would surely be more enticing to British investors.

On February 17, 1899, legal documents were prepared designating Barnum & Bailey as a limited liability company with a capital of \$2,500,000. The show's physical equipment was appraised at \$300,000. Also a value of \$1,000,000. was placed on the name 'Barnum' which, as one commentator remarked, "is an example of the eccentricity of human nature."

This reference to Barnum recalls that he, too, once recommended making the circus a stock company. His proposal came about following a railway accident in which the show

lost a number of animals. Thus, Barnum wrote to Mr. Bailey:

"Neither of us have a right to jeopardize all we are worth in a single enterprise. If we should somehow kill 50 persons instead of 30 horses it might cost us  $\frac{1}{4}$  million dollars. We can form a stock company with a small comparative capital ... and then whatever happens we are liable only for what property the show owns ..."

Barnum & Bailey, Ltd. was not formally recognized as such until April 18, 1899. Thereupon, Mr. Bailey assumed the post of Chairman, Managing Director and major stockholder. Joseph T. McCaddon and George Oscar Starr became Associate Directors, each of whom received generous shares of stock for "their many years of faithfulness, skill and ability." It should be noted here that early on in his plans to form a limited company, Mr. Bailey stated that one of his objectives was "to reward the show's agents and employees in all departments with gifts of stock in keeping with their positions and terms of service."

The ink was hardly dry on the prospectus of Barnum & Bailey, Ltd. before financial writers throughout Great Britain pounced on it with a vengeance. Here are samplings of their comments:

"As an investment, we do not think the shares of Barnum & Bailey are

worth the paper they are printed on; and we are very much afraid that Mr. Bailey is really of the same opinion. Invest in the circus? Fudge and flap-doodle."

"This offer is an insult to the intelligence of the investing public. Some features of the show are a disgrace to the age we live in. But the latest freaks are the shares offered the public. This is, indeed, freakish finance."

"Those who buy shares in Barnum & Bailey should consider them much as they would the gaming tables of Monte Carlo."

"My advice to my readers is: see Barnum & Bailey's show as often as you like, for it is first-rate entertainment, but don't invest your money in the show."

"Seeing the number of animals to feed, the salaries to pay and the various contingencies which may arise at any time with a show of this sort, I cannot recommend that the public invest in this concern. It is purely a speculation."

"The fact is that this show is much more suited for the United States, and that it should never have been brought here and offered as a public company. There is little hope for the Barnum company, except in the hearts of its directors."

"Before investing in Barnum & Bailey, the public should consider the hitches and disappointments that, as a rule, are almost inseparable from an enterprise of this sort including the vagaries of climate, the breakdown of equipment, epidemics and accidents. Anyone of these can flatten a circus."

"Mr. Bailey may have no difficulty getting the desired amount of capital from the English public, but I can promise him that he will get not one pittance of mine."

At least one financial writer came to the aid of the circus with these comforting words: "Barnum & Bailey has been in existence for almost 40 years. Its credit and commercial standing have always been unimpeachable, whilst its career over the years has been one of continuous and unparalleled success."

And how did the American press greet the news that the circus was to be lost to the British? One editorial comment is typical: "So, 'The Greatest Show on Earth' is to be expatriated? Its headquarters are to be moved from Bridgeport to Britain. Its elephants are to become British elephants. Its monkies British monkies. Its freaks British freaks. Its owners British owners. Say it isn't so, Mr. Bailey."

Regardless of the warnings sounded by England's financial press, applications for shares in Barnum & Bailey, Ltd. were received in "overwhelming numbers". Indeed, requests for shares were received even before final details of the prospectus

## BARNUM AND BAILEY, LIMITED.

Incorporated under the Companies Act, 1865 to 1906, whereby the liability of each shareholder is limited to the amount of his share.

**CAPITAL - - - £400,000,**  
In 400,000 ORDINARY SHARES of £1 each.

**ISSUE of 266,667 SHARES of £1 Each,**  
AT A PREMIUM OF 5s. PER SHARE,

PAYABLE AS FOLLOWS:

2s. 6d. on application.  
7s. 6d. on allotment.  
11s. 6d. (including premium) on 4th April, 1899.

Making a total of 26s. 6d.

The vendor stipulates for the allotment to himself on the purchase money of the remaining 133,333 shares, at 25s., being the maximum amount allowed by the Rules of the Stock Exchange.

THE CERTIFIED PROFIT FOR THE YEAR JUST CLOSED AMOUNT TO OVER  
50 PER CENT. ON THE WHOLE CAPITAL OF THE COMPANY.

### DIRECTORS

JAS. ANTHONY BAILEY, the present Sole Proprietor (Managing Director).  
JOHN HENRY COOPER, the present Vice-President.  
GEO. OSCAR STAGG, the present Associate Manager.

BANKERS—PARKE'S BANK (Limited), Bartholomew Lane, London, E.C., and also  
Branches.

SOLICITORS—ELLI MUNDAY and CLARKE, College Hill Chambers, 25, College-Hill,  
London, E.C.

AUDITORS—EDWARD MOORE and SONS, 3, Covent-Garden, London, E.C.

BROKERS—JOHN FRUST and CO., 1, Tavistock-Street, and the Stock Exchange,  
London, E.C.

SECRETARY RUSSELL C. SPURGEON

REGISTERED OFFICES—3, CROSBY-SQUARE, LONDON, E.C.

### PROSPECTUS

This company is formed for the purpose of acquiring a going concern, the world renowned show known as "Barnum and Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth" together with all its stock of railway cars and vehicles, animals, exhibits, apparatus, furniture, fixtures, and personal effects, etc., the assets right to the use thereof, the Great Circus and Finance Company of America, Inc., having sold its interest in agreement for lease of its "Winter" or "Head" quarters premises specially erected for him at Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The Exhibition arrived in England from America in November, 1897, and opened for a season of 18 weeks at Olympia, London, under the name of "The Great Circus and Finance Company of America, Inc.", and was reopened, notwithstanding that the original lease was not yet fully paid, on April 11th, 1898, when it was decided that other arrangements would have been capital outlay, for permanent alterations to Olympia, and the new lease was taken up by the company, and so completed with the improvements at London County Council.

The exhibition closed on the 2nd of April, 1898, and a general tour was commenced at Manx-Mother on April 11th, 1898, and terminated at Blackpool-Town on June 12th, 1898, being a period of 22 weeks.

The profit upon this previous tour amounted to £113,345 9 10

The net result for the year, therefore, is as follows:

Profit at Olympia —————— £113,345 9 10  
Less tax on personal tour —————— 113,345 9 10

Less reserve for depreciation —————— £10,000 0 0  
Less special construction account at Olympia, see above —————— 12,666 7 5

£113,345 9 10  
£12,666 7 5  
£100,678 2 5

Actual net profit for the year —————— £100,678 2 5

A portion of the prospectus of the Barnum & Bailey Limited, dated February 17, 1899, as published in a London, England, newspaper. Albert Conover collection.

were known. According to a newspaper report of February 24, 1899: "There was an instant popular demand for stock in the circus ranging from requests for single shares to thousands of shares. The offers came from all parts of the Kingdom, from the Continent and even from America by cable. A force of forty clerks has been actively engaged in figuring the allotments, and so continuous has been their labor, that they have been compelled to take their meals at their desks."

In fact, it was reported that the demand for shares was so great that an all-time record was set for stock in a British limited company. The total number of applicants is said to have reached 76,423. Apparently, a lot of people wanted a piece of the circus—from yeoman to nobleman."

To go back to our original question: Why was Barnum & Bailey, Ltd. organized? As previously mentioned, there were reasons other than financial. As the records testify, a compelling reason—and it may have been the single most important one—was to protect the title "Barnum & Bailey" and the slogan, "The Greatest Show on Earth". Although the records concerning this matter are clouded in "legalese", it has been possible (thanks to a lawyer) to draw some

conclusions that may be valid. Presumably, should Mr. Bailey have died while sole owner, the title (under British law) might have fallen into the public domain. However, it appears that as long as the show operated as a limited company, the title would remain the company's property.

Yet, one finds in the records another entry in conflict with the statement just cited. The second one clearly states (without any legal mumbo-jumbo) that Mr. Bailey at the time the limited company was formed specified that he—and he alone—would retain sole ownership of both the title and the slogan. In so doing, he stated that he was fulfilling an agreement made between himself and P.T. Barnum that he, Bailey, would perpetuate the title throughout his lifetime. Barnum, ever-conscious of maintaining his niche in history, evidently feared that his name might at sometime be eliminated from the title.

Thus, we are confronted with a dilemma: was the title securely held by the limited company or was it the exclusive property of James A. Bailey?

There is evidence, too, that those responsible for forming Barnum & Bailey, Ltd. were concerned about the fate of the title in the United States. They even entertained the possibility of legal complications arising in this country if the show should operate here as Barnum & Bailey after the deaths of both partners.

If all of this concern (and confusion) about ownership and perpetuation of the title proves nothing else, it firmly establishes one fact—that the title "Barnum & Bailey" was a highly-valued asset. A fact that is no less true today than it was then. Incidentally, most New Yorkers persist in referring to the circus as Barnum & Bailey's—the upper half of the title having not yet caught on.

Available records reveal only a smattering of information about the operation of Barnum & Bailey after it became a limited company. However, comments occur here and there in the British press that tell us something of its history following Mr. Bailey's death.

Mrs. Bailey, his sole heir, went to London in December 1906 to attend business meetings relative to probating her husband's estate, including almost half of the shares which he held in the limited company. Among other things, discussions were held concerning the title and the possibility of renting or leasing it to other showmen. Seemingly, this was not approved.

No dividends were declared at this meeting—in contrast to previous ones when 7% and 10% were paid. The loss of dividends was attributed to "the unprecedented run of bad weather" which plagued the show during the

## BARNUM & BAILEY, Limited

COMPARISON OF FIGURES SHOWN IN STATEMENTS OF EDWARD MOORE & SONS  
WITH THOSE SHOWN IN STATEMENT OF HASKINS & SELLS

	1903 Moore & Sons' Statement.	1904 Haskins & Sells' Statement.	1905 Moore & Sons' Statement.	1906 Haskins & Sells' Statement.	1906 Moore & Sons' Statement.	1906 Haskins & Sells' Statement.
RECEIPTS.....	405,461. 17. 6.	404,874. 5. 0.	324,807. 1. 10.	324,402. 15. 6.	306,901. 12. 7.	298,079. 1. 1.
EXPENSES (Exclusive of Depreciation).....	333,697. 6. 8.	392,493. 13. 7.	269,944. 2. 4.	304,539. 15. 11.	228,550. 17. 5.	249,728. 5. 11.
PROFITS.....	71,764. 10. 10.	12,380. 11. 5.	54,862. 19. 6.	19,862. 19. 7.	78,350. 15. 2.	48,350. 15. 2.
CHARGES APPEARING IN THE PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT:						
Royalties.....			672. 7. 1.		2,968. 18. 9.	
Depreciation.....	10,000. 0. 0.	10,000. 0. 0.	10,000. 0. 0.	10,000. 0. 0.	15,000. 0. 0.	15,000. 0. 0.
Reserve.....	50,000. 0. 0.					
Miscellaneous.....	616. 0. 7.					
Total Charges.....	10,000. 0. 0.	60,616. 0. 7.	10,000. 0. 0.	10,672. 7. 1.	15,000. 0. 0.	17,968. 18. 9.
SURPLUS FOR PERIOD PRIOR TO DIVIDENDS.....	61,764. 10. 10.		44,862. 19. 6.	9,190. 12. 6.	63,350. 15. 2.	30,381. 16. 5.
DEFICIT.....		48,235. 9. 2.				
DIVIDENDS.....		26,666. 14. 0.		16,000. 0. 5.	20,000. 0. 5.	
SURPLUS FOR PERIOD AFTER DIVIDENDS.....	61,764. 10. 10.		44,862. 19. 6.	6,809. 7. 11.	63,350. 15. 2.	10,381. 16. 0.
DEFICIT.....		74,902. 3. 2.				
DIFFERENCE.....	136,666. 14. 0.		51,672. 7. 5.		52,968. 19. 2.	
DIFFERENCE CONSISTING OF:						
Reserve for Estimated Capital Expenditure.....	50,000. 0. 0.					
Estimated Cost of Installation at Olympia and Tour of Buffalo Bill's Wild West.....	40,000. 0. 0.					
Provision for Estimated Advertising Expenses.....	20,000. 0. 0.		35,000. 0. 0.		30,000. 0. 0.	
Dividend.....	26,666. 14. 0.		16,000. 0. 5.		20,000. 0. 5.	
Replies Accrued to James A. Bailey.....		672. 7. 1.		2,968. 18. 9.		
Conversion of U.S. Currency into Sterling.....			1. (Red)			1.
TOTAL.....	136,666. 14. 0.		51,672. 7. 5.		52,968. 19. 2.	

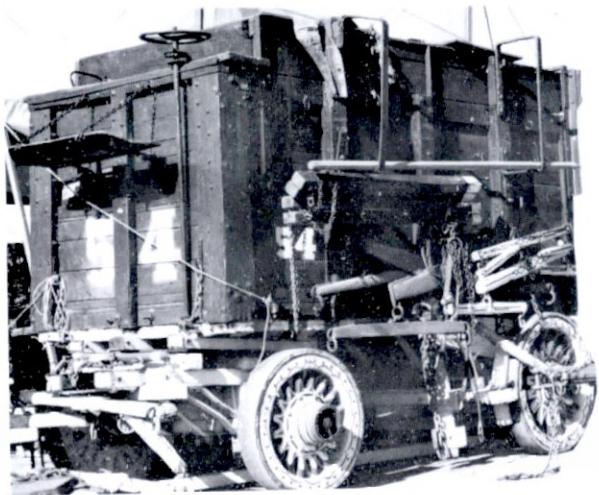
New York, May 10, 1907.

tour of 1906 causing a loss of 20 dates. Net profits of the season were reported to be only \$40,000 though other estimates held that the circus lost at least \$150,000. Questions were raised by stockholders as to whether there was any sense of putting the show on the road again. They were, as one report

This page from the annual report of Barnum & Bailey Limited issued in 1906 shows the profit and loss statement for the years 1903 through 1906. It is dated May 10, 1907. Albert Conover collection.

put it, "literally frightened out of their

### MERRY CHRISTMAS AND SEASONS GREETINGS TO ALL OUR CIRCUS FRIENDS FROM THESE GLORIOUS AND GRAND OLD CIRCUS TROUPERS.



ORIGINAL HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS WATER WAGON 54

On all wood sills, built probably in very early 1920's for HW by Tom Tucker. AC Corp. shows Master Wagon Builder. Screw brake. St. Mary's wheels 6 tires—good

condition. Side racks cook house poles, tables, equipment on top, with full load water estimated 8 or 9 tons.

ORIGINAL HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS WARDROBE WAGON 88

A Monster Wagon, all steel sills and angle side braces, steel corners—built in 1924 by Cap Curtis. Master heavy wagon builder for AC Corp. Screw brake. St. Mary's wheels 6

tires, all new wood, top to bottom, faithfully restored where needed. Carried all wardrobe trunks and when unloaded served as private dressing room for late Clyde Beatty.

(BELIEVED TO BE LAST REMAINING H-W WAGONS IN PRIVATE OWNERSHIP)



PHILLIP GERALD BOOKER  
PRESIDENT

Suite 116  
1670 S. Amphlett Blvd.  
San Mateo, CA 94402  
415 - 574-1203

shoes" when they realized what was happening to their investment.

In view of this dismal financial picture, stockholders turned their attention to the show's surplus funds which were estimated to be at least \$1,000,000. They, naturally enough, demanded their share of it.

John Ringling must have sensed that the time was ripe to gobble up Barnum & Bailey. For he appeared in London while the meetings were under way. A London newspaper gave this account of his visit: "John Ringling has made known to the stockholders of Barnum & Bailey, Ltd. that his show makes money, including a profit of \$800,000 during the season of 1906. He said that Ringling Bros. would do it again and that his show had the resources and the capital to wage a killing fight against Barnum & Bailey throughout the United States. An agreement may be arrived at whereby the Ringlings will buy up the capital stock of Barnum & Bailey, Ltd. for between \$2,500,000 and \$3,000,000."

These figures no doubt warmed the hearts of the stockholders. But, the chances are that John Ringling was simply indulging in "big talk" and awaiting the most propitious moment to move in for the kill. As we now know, the Ringlings acquired the show—lock, stock, barrel and title—for \$410,000.

The end came for Barnum & Bailey, Ltd. when its complicated business



Paris, March 9, 1902.

A.J. Neumann, Esq.,

254 No. Henry St.,  
Brooklyn, N.Y., U.S.A.,

Dear Sir,—

I was very much surprised to get your letter of Feb. 6, asking for a recommendation. If you valued such a document from me, why did you not take pains to call on me before quitting so unceremoniously and suddenly in Paris. When I hired you in Brussels to stay another year, with the understanding that you would do lithographing in Paris, and have your old position in the spring, you seemed quite satisfied with the arrangement, and I certainly had a right to expect that you would be manly enough to come and notify me that you wanted to quit. Do you think it is a great recommendation for a man's reliability that he should get in a huff one day and put on his coat and declare that he would work no more, demand his time, rush away, fail to tell his employer that he is going, and then write from the other side of the world that he wants a recommendation? I don't, and that action has cancelled in my mind all the good you did before.

Yours truly,

Clarance L. Dean

affairs were resolved in 1907-1908.

#### Some interesting excerpts from the prospectus of Barnum & Bailey, Ltd.:

"This Company is formed for the purpose of acquiring as a going concern the world-renowned Show known as 'Barnum & Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth', together with all its stock of railway cars, road vehicles, horses, animals, plant, stage and circus properties, contracts with artists, and prodigies, etc., the exclusive right to the use throughout Great Britain and Europe of the name of Barnum & Bailey, and Mr. Bailey's interest in agreement for lease of his 'Winter' or 'Head' quarters premises specially erected for him at Stoke-on-Trent.

"The excellence of its entertainments has won for 'Barnum & Bailey's Greatest Show on Earth' a great reputation amongst all classes of people, both in this country and in the United States. The show has been in existence for about 40 years, and has been known as 'The Barnum & Bailey' Show for the past 18 years ... Mr. James A. Bailey, who is sole owner of the Show, commenced his career in the show business at the age of 13 years, and has been now over 30 years occupied therein, and during that period has successfully conducted exhibitions in the United States, Canada, South America, Australia, New Zealand and Great Britain, and has maintained and increased in size and popularity the Show that bears the joint names of Barnum & Bailey, a name which it has been his constant endeavor to keep far in advance of anything else in the show world.

"Mr. Bailey has his own service of railway cars (specially built for him)

67 in number, each 54 feet in length, and making up four full trains, all of which are equipped with the most modern railway appliances for strength and safety, and afford accommodation for the whole of the personnel, animals, and materiel of the Show. The Railway Companies of Great Britain, perceiving the advantages to be derived by them from the additional excursion traffic which would be created by this Exhibition throughout the country, have entered into special agreements for a period of five years for the transport of these cars and the employees of the Show.

"One of the enormous tents within which the main performances are given in the provinces has seating accommodations for nearly 15,000 people.

"The organization of the business is remarkably complete, and such as to admit of a performance closing at 11 o'clock at night in one city and re-opening at another over 100 miles distant by noon the following day, a feat which was frequently accomplished during the recent tour.

"It is proposed to continue the provincial exhibition in England during 1899 and 1900, and commencing on April 10th next (the prospective route for 1899 including about sixty towns not yet visited), and, profiting by the experience gained during the last season, an improved financial result is anticipated. Following this it is proposed to make the first Continental tour in 1901 (to last for at least two years before returning to England) and the Directors have the utmost confidence that such a Continental tour will prove a colossal success.

"The Show is constantly being improved, and each season many new features acts and entertainments will be introduced, thus keeping it always

fresh and attractive in the eyes of its millions of patrons.

"Barnum & Bailey's headquarters are at Stoke-on-Trent (chosen for its central location), where two huge new buildings of brick and iron, measuring respectively 90 by 450 feet and 120 by 570 feet (heated by steam and lighted by electricity) have been especially erected and adapted for them, comprising large stores, animal cages, practising ground, dining accommodation, workrooms, mechanical and tool departments, blacksmiths', carpenters', paint, harness and other shops and appurtenances, and where, when necessary, during a short winter term the whole show can be accommodated and all its cars and paraphernalia of every description thoroughly overhauled and put in perfect order. The buildings have the advantage of being connected with the main railway by lines running right into the premises.

"Mr. Bailey, by taking the post of Managing Director, will continue the direction of affairs as hitherto. Mr. McCaddon and Mr. Starr have both for many years assisted Mr. Bailey in the management, and their services being retained as Directors, the continued efficiency of the management is guaranteed, and, as Mr. Bailey intends to present these gentlemen with at least 10,000 shares each as a reward for their many years' services to him, they will thus have a substantial interest in the future success of the undertaking."

#### Acknowledgements

My thanks to those individuals and institutions without whose aid I could not have put this article into readable form. Alexander Clark, formerly of the Library of Princeton University, delved into the McCaddon Collection there to help me from time to time. W.H. Crain, Curator, Hoblitzelle Theatre Arts Library, University of Texas, supplied me with some rare documents that were essential to this story. From the tattered press books of Barnum & Bailey in the Library of the Ringling Museum of the Circus, I obtained many pertinent facts and figures.

## WANTED

### ANYTHING PERTAINING TO THE FRED BUCHANAN CIRCUSES

YANKEE ROBINSON  
WORLD BROS.  
ROBBINS BROS.

1906-1920  
1923  
1924-1931

LITHOS, ROUTE BOOKS, ROUTE CARDS,  
TICKETS & ESPECIALLY PHOTOS  
ALL LETTERS ANSWERED.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

JOSEPH S. RETTINGER

P.O.Box 20371 Phoenix, Arizona 85036

## CHS ELECTION RESULTS

The results of the 1979 CHS election is as follows:

President: Tom Parkinson	85
Earl Schmid	1
Vice President: Richard Flint	78
Gene Plowden 1, Al Conover 1, C. P. Fox 1.	
Secretary-Treasurer: Edward L. Jones	81
Alva Johnson 1.	
Director Div. 1: Fred D. Pfening, Jr.	19
Director Div. 2: Copeland MacAllister	9
Director Div. 3: James Dunwoody	16
Director Div. 4: Joseph T. Bradbury	14
Director Div. 5: Robert Parkinson	15
Director Div. 6: James McRoberts	6
Director Div. 7: Joseph S. Rettinger	1
Director Div. 8: Chang Reynolds	5
Director Div. 9: Edward W. Cripps	0

Hans Dulle, Election Commissioner,  
December 1, 1979.

**Greetings and Best Wishes  
for a  
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**

**CIRCUSIANA MART, 2515 DORSET RD.,  
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43221**

## THE DISASTROUS HAGENBECK-WALLACE CIRCUS TRAIN WRECK OF 1918



8 A.M. June 22nd, 1918, THE MICHIGAN CENTRAL RAILROAD TROOP TRAIN SPECIAL #8485, IVANHOE, INDIANA

## "NO PERFORMANCES TODAY"

by Warren A. Reeder, Jr.

An account of the events leading up to, during and following the train wreck of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus train and a Government Troop Train at Ivanhoe (Tower), Indiana, 4 a.m., June 22, 1918. 137 pages, over 100 photos drastically present this historic event.

(Cut and mail)

HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
260 - 165th Street Hammond, Indiana 46324

LIMITED EDITION  
\$4.50 Per Copy

I enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ copy(ies) of "No Performances Today" by Warren A. Reeder, Jr. Mail to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

# RINGLING AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS

Produced By Irvin Feld and Kenneth Feld

The Longest Running Hit  
In Show Business  
History!

America's  
Number One  
Family Show!



ALL NEW  
110th YEAR  
HAPPY HOLIDAYS